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MERRY CHRISTMAS.

BY WILLIAM MACKINTOSH.

The common greeting now falls on the ear,
"A Merry Christmas" friends say when they meet.
But is it station, wealth, and goodly cheer
That make the season's merriment complete?

Should all our care be merely self alone,
That frowns the helpless poor one from the door,
As if our riches were an endless loan,
For our sole good and happiness—no more?

Does not his joy, who cheers the drooping heart,
And to the needy plaint gives kindly heed—
Who does his best to heal one's bitter smart—
The mirth of festive revelers exceed?

NAMELESS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE NEMESIS OF LOVE," "UNDER WILD SKIES," "ALONG THE LINE," "PENKIVEL," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER V.—[CONTINUED.]

IT was getting dark now. The short winter's day was closing in. The lady stirred the fire into a bright blaze before she spoke to her visitor.

"I hope I am not dreadfully rude, but I don't think I have ever seen you before."

"Never," said Lilian, rather taken aback at her abruptness. "I hardly know how to excuse my coming to you."

"My brother sent you, didn't he?"

"Yes. He thought you would help me."

"I always redeem Guy's promises!" and the plain face grew beautiful with its kindliness, "because I can trust him not to make rash ones. Now what can I do for you?"

Lilian explained, simply, that she was alone in the world, and there was no one to help her to earn her own living.

Miss Ainslie looked at her sharply.

"And you know no one?"

"I know no one to whom I could apply."

"Then you have had friends and quarrelled with them. Hadn't you better make up? Teaching's hard work."

Lilian shook her head.

"It cannot be harder than waiting! Oh, Miss Ainslie, I think the cruellest thing in the world is waiting! Day after day to try, and always to fail, crushes the life out of one."

"Then you are not afraid of work?"

"I would rather work than wear my life out in an aimless, useless existence!"

"I like that," said Miss Ainslie, frankly. "What can you do?"

Lilian told her frankly.

She sat down to the piano when the lamp came, and played one of Mozart's sonatas. She answered her hostess in French and Italian.

She proved that she was intelligent and rarely accomplished.

Kate Ainslie felt intensely surprised. She poured out the tea almost in silence. Not until Lilian had eaten and drank did she say—

"I think I can help you, Miss Green. Only first I must ask you one question. If I knew your whole history is there anything in it that would make me refuse to aid you?"

Lilian never hesitated.

"I have injured no one. I have had a crushing sorrow, and I may have been impatient under it; but I have done nothing to make me unfit to instruct the purest children in England!"

For three minutes there was silence, then Miss Ainslie said—

"And you could bring yourself to go into the country, to live miles away from any town—shut up in a dull school-room?"

"Thankfully!"

"You could bear to live with people not noted for their consideration? People who think a governess beneath them; and that all gratitude for her care of their little ones is dispensed with by a quarterly cheque! You think you could bear that sort of life?"

"I can bear anything that is honest!"

"Then I think you may consider yourself engaged as governess to Lady Dacres. She was once a pupil of my own, and is good enough to declare that I am the fittest person to choose a sovereign for her schoolroom!"

"And you think she will have me?"

"She will have whomever I send. Perhaps I ought not to select one of whom I know so little; but you possess all the needed accomplishments, and very few people who do so are willing to exile themselves for nine months in one year, which is what accepting this situation means. I will write to Lady Dacres to-night, and if you will give me your address I will let you know her reply."

Lilian gave the address. Lord Earl's adopted child had no false pride. She was poor, and it was no disgrace to her that she lived in a poor locality.

Kate Ainslie, who knew London well, guessed a little how hardly things had gone with Miss Green, from the very fact of her lodging in Whitly-street, S. W.

She made no comment, only when Lilian rose she took her hand very kindly, and said in the sharp way which lost all its sting when accompanied by her smile—

"Do you know Miss Green, my brother is never mistaken in a face? The people he trusts always repay that trust! I look to you that Lady Dacres is not disappointed with my recommendation?"

"She shall not be if I can help it!"

And then the lonely waif—the nameless orphan girl—passed out from that warm, bright into the gloom of the winter's evening.

* * * * * *

The next day Lilian spent entirely in her lonely attic.

She had a strange confidence that Miss Ainslie's recommendation would be effectual. It seemed doubting her friend in need to seek after other engagements until she heard the result of the letter to Lady Dacres, and some instinct, which she could not have explained, made the lonely girl shun the confectioner's where she had met her knight.

It would seem, she thought, in her maidenly modesty, like trying to force herself upon his notice to go there again.

She watched anxiously for the post on Saturday morning, the third day after her visit to Leckenham, but no letter came for her.

She thought, with a sigh, that if she did not hear from Miss Ainslie by Monday she must recommence her weary search for employment; and as she sat, half-perished with the cold, in her humble room, sewing away industriously, her hopes were not so bright as they had been the day before.

She was weary of work—plain sewing is infinitely dreary when one has no pleasant theme for thought.

She was wondering, with a vague yearning, how long Earlsmere would be without a master, when a knock came at the door—a determined rap, as though the person from whose knuckles it emanated much objected to be kept waiting.

Lilian's first thought was the post. It was barely ten, but she had no precise idea of the time of the second delivery.

She sprang to the door and threw it open but she did not find Mrs. Matthew's buxom figure with the talisman in her hand, but the slight trim-looking mistress of Rose Bank, very comfortably dressed in a winter costume, trimmed with fur.

She said nothing of the steep ascent, she never remarked upon the lack of fire, or the blue tint of Lilian's fingers; she took a seat upon the foot of the bed, which, seeing there was no second chair, was prudent, and remarked, calmly—

"You see I have come to return your visit Miss Green."

"It is very kind of you."

"Saturday is my holiday, and I often come up to town. Well, I expect you are wondering what news I have for you?"

A bright color came into the girl's pale cheeks.

"Oh! have you really heard?"

"Really. I might have posted a letter to you last night, but as I was coming to town I preferred to call. Well, the thing is settled; Lady Dacres declares herself quite satisfied, and will expect you as soon as you can go."

Lilian threw herself on the ground, and, with pretty, foreign grace, kissed Miss Ainslie's hand.

The latter drew it away.

"I'm not the Queen, child! Don't treat me like royalty. Well, how soon can you be ready? I hope you will be pretty comfortable there. If you like children you get on, for I have heard the little Dacres are remarkably pretty—though spoilt of course."

Her eyes travelled round the room; she saw the extent of Lilian's wardrobe, for there was no chest of drawers, and the small portmanteau was the only receptacle for clothes. She took in the state of the case at a glance.

"I think you had better come out with me and do some shopping, Miss Green."

The girl's blue eyes met hers doubtfully.

"I will see to that. What's the use of being an old maid with a few savings if one cannot help other people? Lady Dacres offers a hundred a-year, so you can pay me back out of your salary. 'Tut!' as Lilian began to protest; "I shall not be trusting you a bit longer than I trust the parents of my pupils."

Under Miss Ainslie's judicious directions ten pounds were made to go farther than ten pounds have ever gone before; then she conducted her companion to a restaurant—not the one—and made her eat a very good dinner. She then announced she must go home.

"Will you write to Lady Dacres and name the day for your arrival? I should make it Monday week, I think; you would hardly be ready before."

"I will write. Oh! Miss Ainslie, how am I to thank you?"

"Don't try. Then you will go down by the twelve o'clock train from Paddington. I hope you will get on comfortably; and Miss Green—have you any money?"

The question was abrupt, but poor Miss Ainslie had tried in vain to introduce it gradually.

She was probably prepared for the answer for she slipped a small purse into Lilian's hand.

"You can't go about without a shilling in your pocket!" she said, when the girl remonstrated; "and, as I said before, you can pay it back out of your first quarter's salary. Well, good-bye! Remember, we trust you."

And the stress on those three words was the only exhortation which she bestowed upon her protegee.

It seemed to Lilian fortune had at last smiled on her again.

She was once more to become an inmate of an easeful home—once more to enjoy the comforts to which gentlewomen are accustomed.

She certainly had heard very little of her employer, and still less of the duties required of her, but if will and effort could fulfil these they should not go undone; and in her gratitude she could hardly resist adding a promise to this effect to the little note in which she informed Lady Dacres of the date of her arrival.

A very busy week followed, Lilian's needle worked incessantly; and so time flew by until at last the morning came which was to launch her on her new life, and, punctually at half-past eleven Lady Dacres' governess reached Paddington station.

Early as it was someone was there before her.

When her cab stopped Guy Ainslie was waiting to hand her out. It was he who directed the porters where to put her luggage, and who seemed as if he had come there on purpose to take all care and trouble off her hands.

"Miss Green," he said, with the strange abruptness which he and his sister both possessed so strongly; "I want to speak to you. Your things will be quite safe; I have told the man to secure a seat for you as soon as the train comes up. Will you take a turn with me away from all this crowd?"

Wonderingly, Lilian obeyed him. Firstly, he was not a man whom any woman would readily have disobeyed; secondly, she owed him too much to cross his wishes.

But for some seconds he did not speak, he seemed to have a great difficulty in beginning what he had to say. At last, he asked—

"What has my sister told you about Lady Dacres?"

Lilian might have answered—

"Very little," but she merely said Miss Ainslie had spoken of Lady Dacres as an old pupil.

"Ah!"

"She said the children were pretty."

"If your life is spent with them in the schoolroom you may be comfortable," he said, slowly; "But I told Kate, Dacres Castle was the last place in the world fit for you—only she would not see it."

A faint flush colored the girl's face.

"You think I am not good enough; but, indeed, I will try my best."

"I never said you were not good enough. Life is a very tangled web indeed at Dacres Castle, and I think it would be difficult even for a woman of the world to steer her way clearly, let alone a child like you."

It was a strange speech.

"I am older than I look; I am nearly nineteen!"

He smiled.

"Are you? That is not very old, Miss Green."

"And I shall be getting older every day."

"Older and more worldly wise."

"Does it take much worldly wisdom to teach two little girls?"

"Yes, if they are ever to become fashionable young ladies!" cried Guy Ainslie, bitterly.

She looked at him in surprise.

"Forgive me,"—gazing into her deep blue eyes—"I did not mean to frighten you. In fact, I came here to try and give you some good advice; only I don't seem doing it. You see," abruptly, "it may not be quite in my line to advise a young lady, only I feel somehow as though you were under my care. It is a strange fancy, isn't it?"

"Very; but I shall be very grateful for your advice."

"Then listen. Never wax confidential with Lady Dacres—never tell her your troubles, and never listen to hers."

"Has she troubles?"

"Never mind that! Well, where was I? Oh! I remember. Do not mention our names, and never let Sir John know at whose recommendation you came to the Castle. It won't be a passport to his favor."

The train was up now; the warning bell had rung.

Lilian remembered suddenly she had no ticket; Mr. Ainslie laughed as she mentioned it.

"I got that long ago!"

He led the way and showed her her umbrella, bag, and other small possessions, carefully stowed away in the corner of a first-class carriage.

He handed her in, and then stood with raised hat as the train bore her rapidly from his sight.

It was a long journey and a very tedious one.

I appeal to anyone who has ever made the trip from Paddington to Chepstow if it be not a wearying one.

At this time, being winter, Lilian was robbed of the pleasures of scenery she might have enjoyed.

The beauty of the foliage, the lovely tints of the green, which make the glory of the West of England in summer time, were all absent now.

It looked cold and desolate; and the girl, who from her foreign training was peculiarly alive to external things, turned from the window and tried to busy herself with the book Guy Ainslie had placed in her hands.

But who ever could read with enjoyment at the very threshold of a new life? No one surely who was young and imaginative!

Lilian felt perplexed by Mr. Ainslie's warning.

She could not make out the exact relations between Lady Dacres and the household at Rose Bank.

If she had simply been his sister's pupil, what could Guy have known of her?

There were nearly twenty years between him and his sister, so that the fact of Lady Dacres' being the latter's pupil did not make her out particularly young.

Besides, she could not be if she had children of twelve and thirteen. Then why should Sir John object to his wife's old friend?

It was all bewildering, and Lilian gave a sigh of relief when, soon after five o'clock, the train stopped at Chepstow station, and she descended from the carriage feeling the first stage of her long journey was really over.

A tall footman accosted her.

"Are you the lady for Dacres Castle, ma'am?"

Lilian confessed that she was. It was like a breath of the old life when she found herself seated in a luxurious brougham, while two noble horses bore her quickly over the seven miles which separated the Castle from the dull, sleepy, little town of Chepstow.

The drive was very quick, almost before six the carriage had turned in at the lodge gates, and was dashing up the avenue.

A crowd of servants were in the hall; but oh! how different was everything to the time when at Lord Earl's side she had first entered Earlsmere.

Here, no one welcomed her; no one addressed her.

It was only when she stood half irresolute not knowing which way to turn, that an under maid-servant appeared from some distant region, and proceeded to show her upstairs.

The girl led the way to a pleasant, well-furnished chamber, hung with chintz; a bright fire blazed in the grate, and wax candles burned on the dressing-table.

Evidently the discomforts of which she had been warned would not arise from lack of provision for her creature well-being.

Her boxes stood at the foot of the bed, and the little maid volunteered her services in unpacking them.

"The housekeeper thought you would like your tea here to-night, ma'am; the young ladies have had theirs."

Lilian felt she would have postponed tea for the sake of seeing the children with whom her life was spent, but she did not oppose it.

She directed Mary's cares for her comfort, soothed her bright hair, and sat down to tea with more appetite than she had felt for long time.

Only when the girl appeared to remove the tray did she inquire the way to the schoolroom, and was ushered down a long corridor to an apartment which seemed quite isolated from the rest of the house.

She pushed the door open and went in; two small, white-robed girls stood by the blazing fire; they both looked up in surprise.

"You are not our governess?"

"Yes," said Lilian, quietly. "Why do you think I am not?"

The elder girl blushed and turned away, but the younger said, frankly—

"You don't look old a bit! All our governesses wear spectacles, and don't have any hair!"

Lilian attempted to suggest spectacles and baldness were not indispensable to the art of tuition.

The children looked at her wistfully.

"I think you'll be nice," said Daisy, at last putting out one small hand. "Shall you like us?"

"Very much if you will let me."

"No one likes us," said Pansy, disconsolately. "You see, Miss Green, we're not boys!" This fact was indisputable. "And papa hates girls!"

"Not really!" said Lilian, gently. "Your papa must love you very much, dears."

"She won't let him."

"Who?"

"Mamma."

Lilian felt as if she was in an atmosphere of mystery.

What could it mean? The statements were not like the confidential outpouring of children in momentary vexation; they were like a clear declaration of facts—of something that everyone knew and they were getting quite used to.

At all risks she changed the conversation and the strange little sisters had begun to chatter quite cheerfully to her, before a very grand nurse appeared and announced that it was their bed time.

Left alone, the governess sat by the fire pondering a little on her new surroundings when the door softly opened and there stood before her what seemed a perfect vision of loveliness.

It was a girl about her own age, although she looked older—a daughter of the gods, so far as stature went; divinely tall, her figure of that wonderful, voluptuous beauty so rare and so attractive; her hair was black as the raven's wing; her eyes were large and lustrous, their color varying from violet to black, according to the mood which influenced her.

She was a complete contrast to Lilian. Both were beautiful; but the delicate grace and loveliness of the governess almost paled before the bewitching, sensuous beauty of her companion.

And their dress, too, was different.

Lilian wore a plain, soft, black cashmere, its only relief, white frills at her neck and wrists.

The other was in white; long cloud-like draperies of white silk, looped here and there with bright pomegranate blossoms.

Jewels flashed on her white throat and rounded arms.

She came up to Lilian's side with outstretched hand.

"I hope you are not very tired Miss Green?"

Lilian took the hand, and made some courteous reply; the stranger drew up a low lounging chair and then seated herself in it.

"Sir John has gone to sleep, and I am all alone. Have you made acquaintance with my daughters? Don't look surprised: didn't Kate Ainslie tell you I had the misery of being a stepmother?"

It was a revelation to Lilian; this beauteous vision was really the person she had been warned to mistrust.

She was ready to accept Guy Ainslie's verdict in most things, but even at his bidding she could not think harshly of her lovely employer.

"I beg your pardon, Lady Dacres. I had no idea."

"Ah! Kate is prudence itself. I daresay she never told you that I used to live at Leckenham, that until six months ago it was my home?"

"Miss Ainslie never told me that."

"And you know them well?" not waiting for an answer. "You have been at Rose Bank; how is the dear old place looking?"

"I was there not a fortnight ago; it looked a happy home."

To her distress Lady Dacres sighed heavily as she answered—

"It was that always. Ah! always. Oh! those were happy years I spent there, very happy. Kate was a little hard on me sometimes, but she had a heart of gold."

"I am sure she has."

"Do you know her well?" sharply.

"She has been very kind to me."

"Ah!"

A long silence.

Lady Dacres sat looking into the fire, at last she asked—

"And Kate never told you really that I was her cousin?"

"No."

Silence; then she added—

"Perhaps she's ashamed of the connection."

"Have you known her very long, Miss Green?"

"Not very long."

"It can't be very long. I have only been away six months, and I am sure I never heard your name."

"It is not six months yet since I returned to England," said Lilian, slowly.

"It does not take Kate Ainslie long to know people; she decides at once," meditatingly, "and she always keeps to her first judgment. Now, she always detested Sir John; don't look so distressed, Miss Green."

Lilian had to change the conversation by asking some questions about the children.

"Oh! do what you like, I shall not interfere. I only want them kept out of my way."

A silence long and deep, so long that poor Lilian felt she was positively rude in not breaking it, only she could think of nothing to say.

At last Lady Dacres turned suddenly towards her, and mentioned a subject which was to be a vexed one between them for ever.

"Of course you have seen Guy Ainslie. What do you think of him?"

CHAPTER VI.

BUT Lilian Green, to call her by the name which she had adopted, felt a strange confusion as Lady Dacres asked her opinion of Guy Ainslie.

Somehow, even without his own words of warning, she would have hesitated to tell her sad history to this beautiful, imperious creature, whose loveliness had no touch of sadness, whose dark eyes seemed ready to read her through and through.

How could she say to Lady Dacres, "I think Mr. Ainslie generous and noble," when she must not allege the reason for this opinion.

"Haven't you made up your mind?" asked my lady, good-naturedly; "really Miss Green, you must have been very unobservant; my cousin Guy is the handsomest man you would meet within a day's journey."

"Is he!" asked Lilian, absently; "you see I have only seen him twice."

"Poor old Guy," reflectively; "how he used to lecture me when I lived at Rose Bank—how long ago it seems."

The governess did not think herself called upon to make any reply to this, as it was murmured very softly, almost as though meant only for the speaker's ear.

She waited a moment, and then again asked Lady Dacres her wishes respecting the children.

"I'm sure I don't know," said my lady, with a yawn, "so that you keep them out of my sight I don't much mind, only you must manage them yourself, and not come to me with any little worries. Why I sent to Kate to recommend me a governess was that those I chose myself were such utter failures. If you justify my cousin's opinion, Miss Green, you will have an easy time of it. I perfectly detest children; I'm sure I was never meant for a stepmother."

The days passed on; Christmas came with its sad memories.

The new year dawned, and Lilian seemed to have settled down as a regular inmate of Castle Dacre.

As its mistress had promised she had never interfered.

Daisy and Pansy were left entirely to the care of their governess, and the two little maidens loved her with all their hearts, their artless affection, their winning ways, helping to soothe the heavy sorrow that had crept over Lilian's life.

When she had been three months at the Castle, and Sir John wrote her a cheque at his lady's request, she had the pleasure of sending back the money Kate Ainslie had lent her, she could not resist writing a few lines to tell of her gratitude for all the kindness shown her by the mistress of Rose Bank.

The reply was prompt and it came from Guy, not from his sister—a simple kindly letter such as any gentleman might have sent to his sister's friend without wronging his wife or fiancee had he chanced to possess one, but yet that letter was the first breeze which stirred the tranquility of Lilian's life at Dacres Castle.

The evening after she received it Lady Dacres entered the school-room.

She was dressed as splendidly as when Lilian first beheld her; but the three months had brought their changes.

Now it was impossible for a keen observer to look at Lady Dacres and not see that she was unhappy—that all her luxuries, all her wealth, her husband's doting love even could not satisfy her heart or fill the void in her life.

She had never been unkind to Lilian; she had never cast petty slights upon her governess.

At first even she had been disposed to confide in the girl recommended to her by her cousin, but Lilian did not respond to her advances, and so their intercourse had grown of a very formal and stately nature, only the haughty beauty never forgot that Miss Green was a lady, and invariably treated her as such. But to-night all was changed.

No sooner had the children gone to their bed than my lady entered, anger written on every feature of her lovely face, her cheeks white with rage, her eyes gleaming with scorn.

"I wonder you are not ashamed to look at me, Miss Green," she began, excitedly; "perhaps you thought, as I left the matter until the children were gone, I meant to look over your deceit. If so, you were bitterly mistaken."

Lilian rose and looked full into the speaker's face.

She never quailed before the glance of those angry eyes.

She stood there calm and collected in her innocence, looking, despite her simple attire, despite her namelessness, to the full, as beautiful and as high born as my Lady Dacres.

"I have never deceived you, my lady."

Lady Dacres flashed one look of scorn at her.

"I hate lies."

"And I have told you none."

"I prefer the evidence of my own senses."

"Lady Dacres," said Lilian, with simple dignity, "the meanest criminal on Heaven's earth is allowed to know the charge brought against him. Surely you will tell me in what I have failed in my duty to your step-children since the day I entered your house?"

My lady looked surprised.

"Sit down," she said, imperatively.

"I would rather stand. Will you tell me the cause of my offence? In what have I deceived you?"

"The first night you came here you told me you had only seen my cousin twice."

"I never saw Miss Ainslie but twice in my life. Will you appeal to her, Lady Dacres, if you doubt my word?"

"I should not care if you had seen Kate two hundred times!" returned Lady Dacres. "I am not alluding to her."

"To whom, then?"

"To the gentleman with whom it seems you correspond. Did you not tell me you had only seen him twice? You would not even admit his good looks, and yet it seems you are on sufficiently intimate terms to correspond with him?"

Lilian's brow cleared.

"Indeed it is the truth!" she said, quietly. "I never saw Mr. Ainslie but twice, and when his letter came this morning I was as much surprised as you could be."

"Do you know that Guy hates writing?—that it is with the greatest persuasion he can be induced to write a letter?"

"I am very sorry he did violence to his inclinations on my behalf," said Lilian, lightly. "But really I could not help it. I would have waited quite patiently until his sister had time to answer my letter."

"Do you mean that he only wrote instead of Kate?—that he sent you a letter simply because she could not?"

"I mean that, Lady Dacres."

"And it was not a love letter?"

The blood came rushing to the girl's fair cheeks.

"Why should you think such things?" she cried, indignantly. "Lady Dacres, I can assure you that I have never given a thought to love or lovers for months. I did not even know but what Mr. Ainslie was engaged. Whether he be or not can make no difference to me."

"He was engaged," said Lady Dacres, with a strange pathos. "That union fell through, but his whole heart was in it. I do not think he will ever care to take another wife after losing his first love."

"Did she die?" cried Lilian, her blue eyes full of sympathy. "How very sad!"

"She did not die."

"Then they may come together yet?"

"I hope so."

Lady Dacres discovered she had been mistaken, and after a few civil phrases left the room; but, alas! she had taken Lilian's peace of mind with her.

Never would the world be quite the same to her again.

She had thought of Guy Ainslie with the warmest gratitude of her nature; she had felt that under Heaven she owed all to him.

Surely of all the world she ought most to rejoice at his happiness; and now, when she heard he had had a fiancee whom he loved with all his heart, a terrible sorrow seemed to fill her soul, and she could almost feel a sort of gladness that some obstacle deferred his bliss.

It was monstrous, it was ungrateful, it was wrong; but Lilian had erred, in all innocence.

Never, until she sat alone in the firelight pondering upon Lady Dacres' sudden anger did the whole truth of her misfortune come home to her.

She had mistaken love for gratitude; she had accorded a girlish fancy to Sir Ronald Trevlyn; but she had given a woman's worship—a woman's heart—to the man who had come to her in her sorest need, Guy Ainslie, my lady's cousin.

In vain she checked herself, in vain she tried to think it a passing infatuation which she would conquer!

Lady Dacres' accusation had opened her eyes to her one folly.

She loved Guy now, she should love him till she died.

She wondered just a little to whom his love was given, and for whose sake Lady Dacres had been so suspicious of her; perhaps the future lady of Rose Bank was an intimate friend of Lilian's employer.

"They need not be alarmed," thought the poor girl sadly, as she went to her; "because he saved me from starvation and helped me in my direst need is no reason he should care for me.

"If my gratitude has deepened into love, if, having nothing else to care for, I have learned to love his memory, such a transformation will not take place with him. He will think of me kindly and pitifully, because men like him can't be hard upon a weak, defenceless girl; but no memory of me will disturb his peace; his thoughts will be with the fiancee, whom fate may some day restore to him, not with the poor orphan girl his charity rescued from starvation—it may be even from a sorrow worse than death!"

She took out the little note he had sent and determined to destroy it, since Lady Dacres evidently considered she had no right to it.

"DEAR MISS GREEN,—

"My sister will write to you in a few days, meanwhile she thanks you for your note and enclosure. We are both very glad you find yourself comfortable at Dacres Castle, and we quite hope that the next time you come to London we shall see you at Leckenham.

"Yours very truly,

"GUY AINSLIE."

It was so short and so simple, that Lilian decided she might keep it without wronging anyone, and so she folded it away in a little old pocket-book which had been her father's, and which in all the hurry and excitement of her flight from Earlsmere she had not forgotten to bring with her.

The next event of consequence was the departure of Sir John and Lady Dacres to London for the seaside.

"It will be very pleasant," said my lady, coming into the schoolroom condescendingly to say good-bye to the governess. "I always wanted a season in town. Sir John would linger abroad so long after we were married that London was empty when we got back, and before I was married I was too——"

"Too young, perhaps?" said Lilian, pleasantly.

"Too poor, I think, I was going to say. Kate and Guy are not what you call rich, you see, and I was dependent on them for everything; besides, they kept me shut up like a nun. I might never have met Sir John if I had not been staying with some of my friends last spring."

"It is only a pleasure deferred. I hope you will enjoy yourself, Lady Dacres."

"Thanks, take care of yourself, Miss Green. Don't let those children worry you to death. By-the-by, I shall see the Ainslies; have you any message?"

But Lilian thought of that winter's evening in that same room when Lady Dacres had brought a cruel charge against her.

She could not, remembering that, send any message to Guy, and somehow she did

not like to send one to his sister and leave him out. My lady smiled a little derisively.

"Out of sight out of mind," she quoted, lightly. "I shall tell them that's what it is and that Mr. Darby has quite succeeded in obliterating their image."

A faint, sick feeling stole over Lilian's heart.

"Please do not say that my lady! As to Mr. Darby, he is nothing in the world to me!"

"But he would like to be."

"Indeed you are mistaken."

"I have eyes. It seems you have none. Why, Miss Green, unless you are the veriest coquette, you must have known whom it is Mr. Darby comes here to see."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

My Friend's Secret.

BY A. H. BALDWIN.

IT was John Robins bestowed the name of the Sphinx on Ella May, and one by one we all took it up, till she was known by it through our whole circle of acquaintance.

There was a strange fitness in the name, as everybody felt, for her coldness, her death-like pallor, the wild look of intense despair in her great dark eyes, proposed a riddle that not one of us could solve.

With strangers it was the same.

Ella was a mystery, while to us who had known her from childhood, and remembered what she had been only a few short months before, the riddle of her life was even more painful than inexplicable.

Much as we all grieved over the great change in Ella, I am sure that no one mourned it as I did.

I belonged to the family only by adoption—taken from a life of drudgery and privation when I was ten years old.

I had been cared for by Mr. and Mrs. May as if I had been their own child, and from the hour I entered their house, I never had cause to remember for a moment that they were not my own father and mother.

With the exception of Ella and myself, we were a family of boys, and all five of them called me sister, and treated me as one.

I loved them all, of course, but Ella was the especial object of my affection.

We were almost the same age, which made us constant companions, but in all other respects we were widely dissimilar—perhaps it was the contrast between us that endeared us to each other—for Ella was as much attached to me as I was to her.

She was tall, dark, and brilliant.

I was small, pale, and plain.

She was of an excitable, high-strung, passionate temperament.

I was by nature equable and patient, and I had learned early and painfully the lesson of self-control.

While we were children we received the same tuition, and attended the same schools; but although I enjoyed every advantage of education that Ella had, I never equalled her as a scholar.

When we were about seventeen, we were both sent to a celebrated seminary for a year's finishing.

At the end of the year I felt that I was making such slight progress in music and languages, that I begged my benefactors to spend no more money for me on a course of study for which I had no especial talent, and I asked, instead, to be allowed to take charge of certain household duties, in which I knew I could be really useful.

My request was granted; but Ella, who displayed much talent in the acquirement of foreign languages, and a positive passion for music, remained for another year at the seminary.

It was our first separation for years, and both of us felt it keenly.

We corresponded constantly.

At last the half-yearly holidays came, and for some weeks we were the close companions we had been for years.

All at once this changed.

She scarcely replied to my long letters, and when she did, it was with half-a-dozen lines, in which she coldly thanked me for my solicitude, assured me she was well, and then ended with some abrupt, incoherent expression of her affection.

We were all greatly disturbed by this extraordinary behavior, for Ella wrote to her father, mother, and brothers in the same manner.

But our wonder was nothing compared to our dismay and distress on seeing her when she finally came home at the end of the year, to return to school no more.

She looked like one who had died, and in returning to this world, had left her soul and all the better part of life behind her.

Nor was it alone in appearance that she was changed.

She seemed to have no emotions of any kind, pleasant or the reverse.

Her studies, once so ardently pursued, were utterly cast aside.

She locked the piano and lost the key.

Her Italian, French, and Latin books she collected together and then calmly burned them.

But I could never see that she made any use of them.

It would be impossible to describe our grief at the terrible change that had taken place in our darling.

How we all questioned, implored, coaxed, and entreated for the cause of this direful change!

She was marble to our prayers.

We were obliged to accept as best we might, this woman of ice—nick-named the Sphinx—for our brilliant and lovable Ella.

Weeks and months passed.

We hoped and prayed for some change.

But, at the end of a year, Ella was still the same.

At least, others thought so.

To me there was a change—but for the worse.

I felt quite sure that she was more utterly abandoned to her unknown sorrow, and more despairing than ever.

But I was more than ever perplexed and alarmed.

One night Ella did not come to our room as usual.

Having waited up for her till it was quite late, I went at last to ascertain the cause of her delay.

I found that she had insisted on having another room, and had retired to it.

I could not wait for explanation, but went to her at once.

Her door was not locked, and I entered abruptly without knocking.

She was sitting on an ottoman, leaning against the bed, and her head bent on her breast, in an attitude of complete despair.

She looked up at me with her woeful eyes fixed long on my face.

But she did not speak. I cannot repeat what I said. I threw myself at her feet.

I wept. I raved

I begged her to tell me why she had separated herself from me by taking another room. I implored.

I prayed her on my knees to confess the cause of her terrible grief—to give up the secret of her unnamed despair.

She was moved, I could see.

I think it was the sight of such emotion in one so quiet as myself that stirred her so suddenly.

At any rate, she caught my hands in both of hers, which were like ice, and whispered in a husky voice—

"Can you bear it? Dare you hear my secret, Mary?" said the girl.

"Yes, darling—a thousand times, yes!" I answered. "Be it what it may, nothing is so terrible, Ella, but what it can be softened when shared with a heart that loves as I love you."

"It is more for others than for myself that I burden you with this sorrow, Mary. But I am growing afraid of myself. I am getting dangerous. I think I am going mad. When you know all you will understand me, dear; and if I should go mad, you will tell them. Let them have cared for, that I may hurt no one. Oh, how shall I tell you? What way is the best?"

Then after a pause, she said—

"Listen to me then, Mary. You say you can bear it. Don't cry out—don't speak. Just listen. I have done a murder!"

I had promised to bear it.

I had been lavish in protesting my strength.

But I could not suppress the cry of horror that rose to my lips.

I buried my face in Ella's dress, and stifled my involuntary cry.

She caressed my hair with her cold hand, and calmed by that little act of tenderness, I raised my head and looked her in the face.

She continued, in a whisper—

"I see, dear. You can bear anything now. It was not a deliberate murder, Mary. It has all the extenuation of being unpremeditated and accidental. But what of that? I can take no hope, no comfort from that.

"When I was home last summer, after you left, Mary, for the holidays, you often heard me speak of our German master?"

"Yes, yes," I replied.

"I loved him then. I don't think I knew it. But when I returned, and saw him still oftener, and learned to know him well, I soon knew that I loved him—that I adored him in my wild, passionate way.

"He loved me too, and I knew it; but I was mad enough to be jealous of him. I accused him of seeking to win it. Most unjust the accusation was. For although Herr Rhineberg was handsome as an Apollo, he was absolutely without vanity, and could not comprehend my insane rage at the admiration felt for him by school-girls whom he taught to read German.

"We were secretly engaged, and as I was a favorite pupil with the principals, I was allowed many privileges from which the other girls were debarred.

"One evening I had gone out a little later than usual, I was wretched. One of our girls had shown me a pretty bouquet of wild flowers that Herr Rhineberg had given her. Surely it was a small matter enough that he should have given a handful of wood violets to a pupil, but it was sufficient to set on fire the demon of jealousy within me.

"I had walked far before I was joined by my lover on this occasion; and when he did appear, and tenderly drew my hand through his arm, it was a long time before I noticed his presence by a word or look.

I noticed his presence by a word or look.

"We had reached the sea-coast—you remember, Mary. It is a couple of miles from the seminary—and unconsciously we took the foot-path leading up the face of a cliff that over-looked the sea.

"It was a favorite walk, and one with which we were both familiar.

"While we stood on the very edge of the cliff, looking over the grand expanse of waters, all my jealous fury surged up within me, because I could not enjoy the situation on account of my suppressed anger and misery.

"I burst forth with all the passion that was consuming me.

"Gustava replied in a light and playful manner, and catching me in his arms, tried to kiss me.

"I drew back angrily, and gave him a furious push as I did so. The suddenness of the action caused him to lose his balance for a moment. The next he was gone.

"I heard, like the roar of thunder, the crash of loosened earth and stone and a few seconds after the far-off sound of a body striking the waters many, many feet below. Oh, Heaven, will I never forget the horror of that instant? Gradually I grew calmer—I stopped to collect my frenzied thoughts, and to think what could be done. I then remembered that Gustava was an expert swimmer, and that he would not have feared to dive from the spot whence he had fallen, if occasion had required it—therefore he was safe. I would not allow myself to think otherwise.

"I was much alarmed on the next morning to find that he did not appear at breakfast; but I would not permit my heart to despair.

"To all questions addressed to me concerning him, I replied carelessly enough that I had not seen him since the previous evening.

"Naturally enough, I was not suspected of having anything to do with his disappearance, for on the night of the tragedy, or on the following morning, I had shown no particular emotion in regard to his absence. But when I felt the certainty of his death—of having murdered him—my state of mind was easily perceived, and speedily discussed throughout the seminary.

"My too evident anguish was not ascribed to the true cause, but was set down to chagrin and hopeless affection for the loss of my lover.

"A report crept through the seminary, and was loudly whispered among the girls that Herr Rhineberg had run away from my persecutions, finding it impossible to return my affection.

"I bore it in quiet—I could do no less. But day by day I waited for the sea to cast up the dead body of my murdered darling.

"It has never done so, it never will. But his angry spirit has returned to punish me still more for my crime.

"Oh, Gustava, Gustava! it was not needed. Do I ever forget it for a moment, sleeping or waking?

"My prayers for pity and forgiveness since that awful night might have melted Heaven's gates! But it is no use; I am accursed, and I must bear the burden of my sin."

I asked an explanation of her last words, and she told me that twice she had seen the face of Gustava Rhineberg looking at her through the drawing-room window, his pale sad face, mutely rebuking her, but making no sign of forgiveness.

I made her describe him to me minutely till his likeness was photographed upon my brain.

I soothed and quieted her by every tender assurance I could think of.

I remained with her; and at last, worn out with emotion, and unconsciously relieved by having shared her sorrow with a sympathetic heart, she fell asleep, and slept soundly till the morning.

I now set at work to discover Ella's ghost—or, as I believed, the living Gustava Rhineberg.

I had to wait long and with patience, while meantime she did not improve.

One evening, as I was coming home in the dusk, I met face to face a tall, fair young man, whom I instantly recognized from her description of him.

I stopped at once, and abruptly addressed him.

He knew me, and understood me at once.

"She believes you dead, Herr Rhineberg, and the sight of your face at the window has nearly driven her mad, for she believes it was your spirit."

He uttered an exclamation in German, which I did not understand, but I understood the tone.

"You must speak English," I said, shortly; and he did, with a strong German accent.

His story might be made much longer and, doubtless, to Ella it was.

Briefly it may be summed up in a few words.

In falling over the cliff he had been violently struck on the head by a large stone dislodged by the falling rubbish, and must have been insensible when he reached the water.

He had probably sunk once or twice, but at last, partially revived by immersion in the water, he had instinctively struck out, but his strength did not suffice to breast the current which was carrying him out to sea.

He floated at the mercy of the waves until he was picked up by some fishermen in a boat; but on being recovered, his reason wandered in consequence of the blow on his head.

He lost his identity, and fancied himself a common sailor, and with that idea he obtained employment on a vessel bound for China.

The hallucination continued for nearly a year; and when at last he returned to himself, he was thousands of miles away from Ella.

His first thought was for her; he returned to her immediately.

At the seminary he learned how she had been affected by his disappearance, and understanding her feelings as they could not, he feared a too sudden assurance that he was still living.

I endeavored, bunglingly enough, I fear, to prepare her for the joyful news; but with the penetration of love she understood me almost instantly. With a cry of love so wild so intense, it thrilled my heart with pain, she caught me in her arms.

"I know what you mean, Mary. I have not killed him, he is alive, he is here!"

I cannot describe her action. She seemed to fly through the air, quicker than thought the door was opened, Gustava was with her and they stood locked in each other's arms.

I turned quickly away and ran from the room. A month after they were married, and the gloom on Ella's heart has completely disappeared.

Bric-a-Brac.

AT ONCE.—The instances of four children at a birth are numerous, but it is recorded that a woman of Konigsberg (3rd September 1794), and the wife of Nelson, a tailor, of Oxford Market, London (October, 1800), had five children at a birth.

EVERGREENS.—The general custom of decorating the churches and houses with evergreens is descended from the Druids. They believed that sylvan spirits would dwell in the evergreen boughs and garlands until spring, and protect the house from evil spirits.

SALT RIVER.—The phrase "Gone Up Salt River" had its origin in the fact that there is a small stream of that same name in the State of Kentucky the passage of which is made difficult and laborious by the winding course of the creek, and by the numerous bars and shallows by which it is dotted. The application of the phrase is to the unfortunate individual who has to navigate his boat up the stream. In its every-day meaning it describes those who are rowed up that far-famed streamlet.

STRANGE TITLES.—Two English dukes hold their dukedoms by a curious concession. The Dukes of Wellington and of Marlborough—descendants of England's two greatest military heroes—are as such required to present to the sovereign a silk flag of an original color and design, and handsomely embroidered with some new sentiment expressed emblematically, failing which their dukedoms are forfeited. The flags are kept on either side of the great window in the armory of Windsor Castle, and are only removed to be replaced by the succeeding year's emblems. As may be imagined, neither duke has ever failed to be on hand in season with his flag.

A FATHER'S LOVE.—Among the provisions of an English nobleman was a chest which he at all times kept locked, and on which was written—"To be removed first in case of fire." When he died, his friends opened the chest, supposing of course, that some valuable document or deed of property, rich jewelry, or costly plate, would be found in it. But what did they find? They found the toys of his little child who had gone before him. Richer were they than all the world's wealth, richer than his coronet; brighter than all the jewels that sparkled on his crest. Not his estate, not his jewels, not his equipage, nothing glorious and great in this world; but the dearest objects to him were the toys of his little child.

THE ONLY GENTLEMAN.—The celebrated philosopher and printer, Benjamin Franklin, went over to Europe and brought with him a negro servant. Franklin, as is well known, was very eager in the pursuit of knowledge, and he traveled all over England to see the manufactures and whatever else was remarkable. He took his servant with him everywhere and the negro saw everything. On their return to London Franklin said to the negro, "Now you have seen all England, how does it please you?" The negro shook his head and replied, "England is a very strange country. Nearly everything works here. Water and fire work; wind and smoke work; horses, oxen, and even dogs work; men women, and children work; everything works except the swine. He does nothing but eat drink, and sleep. The swine alone is a gentleman in England."

LUCKY AND UNLUCKY.—There are undoubtedly lucky men and unlucky ones. One of Girard's rules was never to have anything to do with an unlucky man. The Rothschilds will not employ a man who has a reputation for ill-luck. Most people believe in luck. History is full of it. Many great men have worn trinkets to give them luck. Many a woman who puts on her stocking wrong-side out will not change it. Few care to be one at a table of thirteen. In Russia they will not pass the salt. Men hate to do anything important on Friday. Millions believe in the virtues of the horse-shoe. Even the most sensible people have little confidence in the ultimate success of a man who has been the victim of an extraordinary run of ill-luck. A man's intelligence and integrity count for nothing in the popular estimation when people have seen his enterprises fail one after another. There is a general disposition to believe that it is better to be born lucky than rich.

PALM LEAVES.—It is well known that Bordeghera, in Italy, supplies the palm-leaves which are annually blessed in St. Peter's at Rome on Palm Sunday. The origin of this privilege is curious and picturesque. On September 10, 1586, Pope Sixtus V. had determined to raise the great obelisk of Heliopolis in the Piazza of St. Peter's. The work was under the direction of the famous architect, Domenico Fontana. In consequence of the difficulty of the task, absolute silence had been enjoined on all who took part in the operation, under pain of death. At the critical moment, just as the mighty monolith was about to fall into its place, the anxiety of the huge multitude was aroused lest all efforts should have been in vain. The ropes had stretched beyond their calculated strain, and there was a fear lest the obelisk should glide obliquely into its socket, or lest the ropes should break altogether. Suddenly a sailor among the crowd, Bresca of St. Remo, disregarding the penalty, cried out: "Wet the ropes!" The advice was taken, the ropes contracted, and all happily concluded. The sailor was not only pardoned for his crime, but allowed to ask any privilege he might choose for himself and heirs. He asked that he might be allowed to furnish the palms for the Easter ceremonies at home, and the privilege still remains in his family.

HOPE ON, HOPE EVER.

BY J. CHAMBERS.

Hope on, hope ever. Though dead leaves are lying
In mournful clusters 'neath your wandering feet;
Though wintry winds through naked boughs are sighing
The flowers are dead; yet in the memory sweet
Of summer winds and countless roses glowing
'Neath the warm kisses of the generous sun.
Hope on, hope ever. Why should tears be flowing?
In every season is some victory won.

Hope on, hope ever, though you deck loved tresses
With trembling fingers for the silent grave:
Though cold the cheek beneath your fond caresses,
Look up, true Christian soul; be calm, be brave!
Hope on, hope ever. Though your hearts be breaking,
Let flowers of Resignation wreathe your cross,
Deep in your heart some heavenly wisdom waking,
For mortal life is full of change and loss.

Hope on, hope ever, for long-vanished faces
Watch for your coming on the golden shore,
E'er while you whisper in their vacant places
The blessed words, 'Not lost, but gone before!'
Hope on, hope ever, let your hearts keep singing,
When low you bend above the churchyard sod,
And fervent prayers your chastened thoughts are winging,
Through sighs and tears, to the bright throne of God!

Hope on, hope ever. Let not toil or sorrow
Stifle the sweet music of Hope's heavenly voice,
From every dawn some ray of comfort borrow,
That in the evening you may still rejoice.
Hope on, hope ever—words beyond comparing,
Dear to the hearts that nameless woes have riven;
To all that mourn, sweet consolation bearing,
Oh, may they prove the Christian's guide to heaven!

AN ODD WOOING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "STRANGERS STILL," "PRINCE AND PEASANT," "THE LIGHTS OF ROCKBY," "A WOMAN'S SIN," ETC.

CHAPTER XX.—(CONTINUED.)

ROSAMOND did not hear it. Little, little did she guess at the conflicting passions that were waging a stern battle in the breast of the man walking silently beside her.

Her thoughts were certainly bent on him, as she swung her hat on her arm unconsciously to and fro, and tried to frame something that would throw a light on his matrimonial intentions.

He certainly had evinced a great taste for Amy's society for him, who usually held aloof from such ways, and talked to men; he never danced, never played tennis, and never paid compliments.

Perhaps Amy had not been so far wrong after all.

Perhaps he had now come to put his fate to the touch, and to ensure her some good offices.

He looked—she glanced swiftly at him—unusually grave to-day.

He had certainly something on his mind.

He seemed to her to be battling with some hidden emotion, some violent, fierce mental agitation.

Well, in that case, she would speak first, and make it all the easier for him.

The half-muttered "Rosamond" had not come to her ear, and ere it was repeated she said, in her most sprightly manner—

"I've something to ask you, Lord Kingsford—that is, if you don't mind telling me."

"And what is that?" he replied, in a very strange voice.

"Perhaps you'll be angry, and think it's none of my business."

"I'm sure I shan't think that!" in a low tone.

"Well, it's only this: every one about here keeps saying to one another, why does not Lord Kingsford marry again, and why don't you?" she added, pausing for an instant, and surveying him with candid, beautiful eyes.

This was certainly a very startling question.

Her companion, who had once more gripped the reins of reason, had gained command over himself, paused too, and became very pale.

His lips quivered under his moustache, and he seemed unable to find an immediate answer.

This hesitation was easily interpreted by Rosamond, who said—

"Ah, of course, it would be painful to you I suppose it always is; but I can't do her any harm," poking a daisy root with her pretty little trim walking shoe.

"And, indeed," with a smile, "they say the greatest compliment a man can pay his first wife is to take a second."

"Should you like it, supposing it were your case?" he asked; with a curious smile gazing at her bent, abstracted face.

"How do you mean?" she inquired, with raised brows.

"I mean, if you were dying, would you like to know that your husband would ever put another woman in your place," he returned, expressively.

"Certainly; I would not mind. No," with decision, "why should I be so selfish, and condemn him to a life of loneliness. And if"—with rather a broken voice, "if I had had the happiness to have been a mother," becoming now of a blazing scarlet, as she met his eyes, "I should have wished him to marry again for its sake.

"I don't believe in cruel step-mothers. I don't believe anyone could be cruel to Tommy," she added, emphatically.

"Don't you?" with a kind of contemptuous smile. "And, of course, no mother could be cruel?" interrogatively.

"No, no mother could," she answered, with decision.

"Heaven! What a hypocrite!" exclaimed her husband, mentally. "What an actress! Anyone who did not know what I know," casting a shuddering glance to Mother Nan, "would believe her like the gospel."

"You talk as feelingly as if you had been a mother yourself, Miss Dane," he said, after a pause.

"Do I?" rather defiantly.

"And you think I ought to marry again?"

"For Tommy's sake, I certainly do," decidedly.

"And am I to sacrifice my best and most sacred feelings for the interest of a child, to replace what cannot be replaced?" he inquired, in a tone of mockery she could not understand.

"If you had any sister, or even aunt, who could live with you," she said, hesitatingly.

"I have neither. It's certainly very kind of you to take this deep interest in my affairs, Miss Dane," sarcastically.

"It is not you nor your affairs that interests me," she answered, haughtily, stung by something she could not quite describe in his look and tone. "I was merely speaking for Tommy's sake, and thinking of him."

"Do you suppose I should find anyone to marry me?" he asked, with an odd smile.

"Yours is Satan's pet sin, Lord Kingsford," she returned, sharply, "the pride that apes humility.

"You know as well as I do that there is not a girl in the county who would not gladly say yes if you asked her."

"And you. What would you say if I asked you?" he said, abruptly, looking straight into her eyes as she spoke.

"I should say no," she returned, with a laugh, and without a second's hesitation, nor the smallest confusion in either face or manner.

"No? But you told me this instant that there was not a girl in the county but would say yes. How can you contradict yourself in the next breath?"

"I—" placing her hand on her bosom, and he remarked that she wore a ring on her wedding finger, a small turquoise ring, "I," with a smile, "am the exception that proves the rule," making a low courtsey.

"Oh! your woman's wit is too sharp for me," he replied, coldly. "Seriously, Miss Dane, putting our feelings aside, as you think it unnecessary to consult them under the circumstances, could you not strain a point, fulfil your own advice, and my duty, so plainly impressed upon me by you just now, and become Tommy's stepmother? You see he is fond of you, and you of him. You say I ought to marry for his sake, and there is the whole matter now in your hands," making a slight movement, as if he were bestowing some gift or responsibility on her.

For all answer she merely smiled, shook her head, and again poked the daisies about with her shoe, with her eyes bent on the ground.

"There are plenty of other and far better girls," she said, emphatically, "who will be only too happy to fill the post."

"But why not you? Come," very decidedly, "look at me, Miss Dane, full in the face, and give me an answer."

"You know the reason," she returned, looking at him with bashful eyes and heightened color. "You know that I'm not like other people. I have a past——"

"Yes, I'm aware of that," breaking a little twig off as he spoke, "but I don't mind," generously. "You say he is dead."

"No, I never said that!" resolutely.

"What would you do if he turned up?" not raising his eyes, and devoting all his energies to the dissection of the twig in his fingers.

"He never will," emphatically. "He goes about under some other name, so I now believe. Probably he is married!"

"What! with you alive?"

"They say that my marriage was a farce," in a low tone.

"Well," after a very long silence, "ours won't be. Come, I'll take the risk of everything, and you will say yes," with cool decision.

"Indeed?" rather indignantly, "I shall say nothing of the kind. You are too fond of jumping at conclusions, Lord Kingsford."

"But think, reflect. Would you not like to be Lady Kingsford?"

"No, certainly not," very contemptuously.

"Oh, come now, I say, seriously."

"Seriously," now becoming very angry, "you need not think your title weighs a feather's-weight with me.

"Were you a prince of the royal blood, had you the wealth of the Rothschilds, were I as other happier girls, free, with no hateful recollections to stand between us; had I even a heart to give, which I haven't, for mine is dead, it would never be yours!" cried Rosamond, passionately, her words coming thick and fast, her passion carrying her to the bounds of eloquence, her head slightly thrown back, as she stood before her companion in the deep green glade. She made (purely even from an artistic point of view) the most beautiful picture that any human eye need wish to rest on.

"And why?" dropped from his lips. "What is your reason, supposing I adopt your past, and can do without your heart?"

"Why, for one excellent reason, that nothing could vanquish, because," catching her breath, "because you are like him! Is not that enough?" defiantly.

"Not in mind, nor in speech, but in face! Yes, though your mouth and jaw are different," scrutinising him as she spoke, "though your hair is sprinkled with grey, your complexion shades darker, your eyes more sunken, you have a look of him that, that I cannot bear!

"It, your face, always brings his before me.

"It's strange, but true, this resemblance," speaking now without any excitement; "he had no grand relations, at least, he never named them to me," as if speaking to herself.

"And you were fond of him?" he asked, in a low voice.

"Heaven knows I was!" she replied, with solemn emphasis. "Oh, if I had a daughter!" she exclaimed, between her little shut teeth, "how I would guard her, how I would watch her for her good, how I would warn her against strange, unknown, false-tongued, handsome strangers, who beguile miserable innocents into mock marriages, who love and who ride away."

"Whatever you thought of him once," remarked Lord Kingsford, surveying her angrily, "you hate him pretty well now don't you?"

"I don't know," she answered, wildly, "I don't know," pressing her hand to her bosom, "I wish I did."

"Well, now, Miss Dane, or, Mrs. Gordon ——"

"Hush," stamping her foot, "never utter a name that is no more mine than it is yours."

At this injunction Lord Kingsford actually laughed, such an odd, strange kind of laugh that Rosamond stared at him, opening her large dark violet eyes in startled amazement.

"Then, Miss Dane, I have something to say to you," he proceeded, in his usual tone of voice.

"You have been good enough to lift the curtain, to let me look into your past, to give me your confidence, which, I need scarcely add, will be entirely respected; every word you have said to me, almost despite yourself, as you once assured me, is sacred.

"And, now, it is only fair that I should return the compliment, lift the corner of the veil that enshrouds my past, and tell you a secret," glancing at her interrogatively.

"Yes, certainly," eagerly.

Rosamond was a woman, and what woman ever refused to listen to a secret?

"It is this," walking along beside her with his hands behind his back, his eyes on the ground.

They had now gradually left the park and were at the foot of a flight of stone steps leading to the terrace which ran round the house, and were overlooked by the windows.

"But first you must promise to keep my secret, as I shall keep yours, and never breathe it to mortal."

"I promise, on my honor!" returned Rosamond, earnestly.

"Then give me your hand on it."

In answer to this appeal she laid a cool, slender little white hand in his for one second only.

He did not retain it; on the contrary, he had dropped it as if it had scorched him, and put his own once more resolutely behind his back.

"Then this is my secret, if you wish to know. You asked me why I did not marry again. The answer is simple. My wife is still living!" fixing his dark eyes on her as he spoke.

"What!" was all that Rosamond could utter; "and, and," her face reflecting the colors of the crimson sunset, now flooding the woods beneath them, "and you dared to ask me to marry you, nevertheless? Supposing I had said yes?

"Were you going to betray me; too? For what do you take me?" she demanded, with blazing eyes.

"I only did it to try you as gold is tried in the fire," he answered, with the utmost composure; "that was all."

"And by what right or authority do you try me?" indignantly, her nostrils quivering with anger, her eyes still flashing. "So much for my madness in telling you of the past; you no longer respect me as as a woman.

"I am rightly served for trusting a man again," springing up the steps.

"You are wrong, quite wrong," seizing her by the wrist and holding her forcibly.

"Would you keep me here against my will?" struggling in his grasp.

But it was useless; he held her as if he had placed a manacle on that little white wrist, and she could not get away.

"You shall go when you hear me, Rosamond" he said, firmly. "I meant you no disrespect. I am not quite a brute."

"Why have you told such falsehoods?" she demanded, fiercely. "Why did you say your wife was dead?"

"Pardon me, I never said it."

"You declared that her child had no mother."

"Neither he has, in one sense."

"Was she his mother."

"Yes."

"Then no more of this quibbling and straw-splitting," furiously, "and set me free this moment.

"How dare you detain me? You shall answer for this yet. Ah, coward, you know that I have no one to take my part, or you would not treat me like this."

"Then go!" he said, giving her an angry push, "but listen to me for a moment longer."

Rosamond made no verbal reply, but stood two steps above him, glaring down upon him like some enraged divinity.

"You must not think too hardly of me, Rosamond," he said, gently. "I mean you and ever have meant you, nothing but good. You are more to me and nearer than you think."

"I don't believe you," she replied, promptly. "You are telling more untruths. Where is she now?" confronting him with angry, scornful eyes. "What have you done with her?"

This was rather a floorer, Allan remarked to himself, as he looked at the young lady in question.

"Oh, she is not very far off," he answered at last, vaguely.

"Is she in a lunatic asylum?" mockingly.

"No."

"Has she made you jealous, and,—and you know what I mean?"

"No."

"Then why on earth don't you bring her home; and let little Tommy be with his mother?"

"That's the rock we have split on, Tommy. She does not want him."

"You are mad, or she is mad?" decisively.

"Not a bit of it," coolly; "no more mad than you are!"

"And is she young?" curiously.

"Quite young."

"And pretty?"

"Very!", emphatically, gazing at her as he spoke.

"The riddle of the Sphinx was a joke in comparison," exclaimed Rosamond, swaying her hat to and fro, and looking down with a world of speculation in her face at the handsome young man standing below her.

"Yes it's a riddle for you, a very funny riddle, and one you'll never find out," he said, at last. "You have been uncommonly near it one or twice though."

"I have, have I: and when?" she asked eagerly.

"Oh, that would be telling you everything."

"Have I ever seen her? Tell me that, at least."

"I don't care if I do," looking up at her with an air of great candor, "and you have seen her often."

"No. Then she must be somewhere in the neighborhood. How extraordinary!" glancing quickly round as if she expected to behold her.

"What's extraordinary?" said another voice coming down from an upper terrace.

"The colors of the sunset, Miss Glen," said Allan, raising his hat as he espied a vision, in a swell afternoon toilet, hastily descending the steps, brown silk stockings, and yellow socks, and bronze shoes; but no, her feet were not half as pretty as Rosamond's!

Rosamond had still a pout on her lip and a frown on her brow, as she turned to her friend and said—

"Lord Kingsford has come to say good-bye."

"Oh, so I supposed."

There were crumbs of comfort at Forbes Manor, which accounted for her tone (easy and every day.)

Alex. Forbes were very good-looking, and after all, she was not sure that she admired dark men so very, very much; and there was any amount of "go" in the Lancer; his eyes had said volumes, he had talked of her "dear little nose," and had squeezed the rings on her hands almost into her flesh at parting.

"There's the first gong," said Rosamond with a start, a start Lord Kingsford shared, and in another moment the trio were hurrying up the terrace, Amy chatting glibly a little in front, when they came to a narrow walk leading out in the sweep where the dog cart was waiting.

She did not notice (not having eyes in the back of her head) that Lord Kingsford had said a few whispered words to Rosamond ere the trio left this narrow shady pathway.

They were "Good-bye, Rosamond (such importinence to call her by her name), "we shall meet again before long. I'll keep your secret safely, and be sure you keep mine."

"And supposing I meet her and find her out?" she whispered.

"There's no fear of that," decisively, and in another moment they were in the open; in two more Lord Kingsford and his fretting chestnut were already out of sight.

* * * * *

"What on earth were you and Lord Kingsford talking about, Rosamond?" said Amy, bursting into the room as she was dressing for dinner.

"I was watching you from the library, and I could not believe my eyes. He seemed to be haranguing you about something at the steps, and did my eyes deceive me, or was he holding your hand?"

"Appearances are deceitful," returned Rosamond, fastening on her bracelet, and turning her face away; "why should he hold my hand? Is he given to holding ladies' hands?"

"No! I must confess he is not; and, Rosamond, not that I so much care, but you got your opportunity, and did you sound him?" significantly.

"Yes! my dear, I did."

"Well, be quick and tell me what he said, at once."

"He gave me most thoroughly and decidedly to understand that he has no intention of marrying."

"Oh!" in a tone of rather keen disappointment. "I suppose, then, he is one of those rare cases of constancy that you read about in novels, but very seldom see."

"I suppose so," picking out an embroidered handkerchief from the satchel before her?"

"Did he speak of her?"

"Well! yes, he did," reluctantly.

"And was she anything out of the common?"

"He said she was young and very pretty. Don't let us talk about him and his affairs; tell me all about your visit to the Forbes's, and what you think of Alex. Forbes. Is he the rara avis his fond sisters have led us to expect?"

"He is very nice, quite as nice as I expected, and a frightful flirt," beaming approvingly.

"Oh, I see," mischievously, "that you are already consoled. 'Light come light go' is your motto, and perhaps one might have worse,', heaving a little sigh.

"Come along now, there is the gong. You need not be smiling at yourself in the glass, Miss Vanity," patting her on the shoulder, "though it does tell you a very flattering tale."

And thus, arm-in-arm, the two young ladies left the room and ran lightly down the wide, shallow staircase together; as pretty a couple as ever descended that old staircase, though it did boast that it was carved and put together in the reign of good Queen Bess.

CHAPTER XXI.

AND Lord Kingsford drove home, and ate his dinner in solitary state, for Tommy was now despatched to bed at a very early hour; and as he smoked his cigar, pacing the avenue in the moonlight, his mind was entirely taken up with his long interview that same afternoon with Rosamond.

Every word, every look, he recalled again and again.

At least she was constant to him in one way. She would never marry, nay, though he had dangled the bait of a coronet before her eyes, and that is a bauble that dazzles most young ladies.

How furious she had been when she sprang up the steps, and how incredulous about Tommy's mother.

Once this visit of Tommy's to the south was over he would fight with fate no longer; he would claim Rosamond, unnatural mother though she was.

Artful actress, there was something about her that drew him towards her, despite of all.

He would rather have her little finger than all the rest of the women in the world put together.

Her look, her touch, her voice had power to thrill every fibre of his heart, a power which no other living being ever could, would, or should possess.

She had successfully withstood one test, rank, and ere he restored her to favor, he meant to try her by another, poverty.

He stood in the avenue, his cigar between his lips, his eyes fixed on the woods of Violet Hill, just visible across the valley.

"Little do our good neighbors know that the roof over there shelters the mistress of Armine Court," he said to himself with a smile, "and a very good mistress she will make too," glancing at the pile behind him. "I wish I was as certain she would be a good mother; but," tossing his cigar into the grass with a sigh, "as she said herself to-day no one could be cruel to Tommy; and, after all," now putting his hands in his pockets as he slowly sauntered towards the open window of the dining-room, "Tommy and I must only take our chance.

* * * * *

And time went by.

Tommy is completely restored to health, and he has been left in charge of a friend of Allan's, a mature old dowager, Lady Greville, who has a grandson of his age, whilst his father takes his horses up to Leicestershire and has some hunting, but he has not come for hunting alone.

He knows that the Brands have taken a small hunting-box near Melton Mowbray, and that there are no more constant followers, than Colonel Brand and Miss Dane. He has not seen them yet.

He has got stabling for his nags, and is putting up at the Queen's Head Hotel along with at least fifteen other hunting men.

The first day he was out was wet—no Rosamond, no rheumatic Colonel Brand—but they had a good day's sport, nevertheless, and Allan came home in very fair spirits.

He had opened some of their eyes that day and no mistake.

He was the only man out, except the first whip, who got over "Annerley Brook," flooded to the brim with a full eighteen feet of water.

After a tub, and changing his wet hunting things for dry clothes, Allan descended to the coffee-room quite ready for his dinner.

He was late, they were already at the soup and sherry, and conversation was both loud and brisk.

At first it turned upon the day's run, and not a few curious eyes were fixed upon the dark, good-looking stranger, who took his place without shyness, and called for his soup.

He was a flyer, and no mistake—a regular first-flight man, some up, they heard, from the Fakley pack, to ride their heads off. All very fine when a man rode horses like his—animals worth two to four hundred guineas—but the beggar could ride.

They must confess there was no flinching about him.

This they had been discussing in a little knot before the fire previous to dinner, and it had been rumored that he was not Mr. Kingsford as stated, but Lord Kingsford.

"Crabbie Crawford knows him," said a little foxy-faced gentleman, "but Crabbie is dining out—Crabbie is nothing if he is not a society man."

Despite of Crabbie's absence the stranger got on very well. He was a true sportsman, modest about his own exploits, enthusiastic about hunting, and by the time dinner was half over he was as much at home with everybody as if he had lived among them for the last month.

After a time the talk veered round to the fair sex.

In this topic the new arrival took no sort of interest, but kept chatting on with another hunting maniac about "cubs and earth-stoppers."

However, at last, the introduction of one name caused him to pause and, so to speak, prick up his ears.

"What became of Miss Dane to-day?" inquired a light-haired young man, in a rather anxious tone of voice.

"She wasn't out to show us all the way as she did on Friday," responded an elderly gentleman. "I daresay she'll get a bit slack in hunting now that she has other fish to fry—now"—grinning—"that she's going to be married."

At this announcement the stranger, who had been hitherto carefully selecting a head of celery to eat with his cheese, thrust it back into the glass bowl, and fixed his eyes upon the bearded man with a look of angry interrogation.

"Ah, I see you know her," he rejoined, complacently, in answer to this look. "She's a monstrous pretty girl, is she not? Just rides like a bird!"

"Who—who -is she going to marry?" asked her husband, bringing out the words with difficulty.

"He has been hard hit, too," thought the mother. "Oh, to the great *parti* down here, A very good chap, Somers, elderly though, not suitable as to age, but any quantity of money, and that's the main thing."

"But she has money of her own."

"Pooh! a mere drop in the basket, my dear sir! This man has seventy thousand pounds a year. He is a kind of Silver King in his way."

"But I did not hear that it was settled yet, Boyce," cried a cheery voice from lower down the table. "Never say die, old man! give us all a chance yet!"

This was pleasant for Allan to hear his wife's name bandied out in this fashion. He must see her, speak to her, and put a stop to this at any cost.

"Well, I don't know what you call settled," drawled the other, facetiously. "I can only say that I saw her on his coach yesterday, on the box-seat. That generally means business."

"Pooh! nonsense!" exclaimed the man at the foot of the table, contemptuously. "If every woman you saw on the box-seat was bound to marry the coachman, it would be a nice state of affairs."

"Campbell, my dear boy," said the bearded one in a paternal manner, "you may as well give her up gracefully. We know she's an uncommonly pretty girl, not a bit loud or fast, and a first-rate horsewoman.

"Any one of us would be proud to claim her, but this heavy weight—this seventy thousand pounds—clears the course and handicaps us all. Cheer up, cheer up! you're o'er young to marry yet. I wouldn't hear of it."

At this crisis the latest comer pushed his chair back without any preamble or apology, got up, and walked out of the room.

"Hullo! hullo! has the dinner disagreed with our flyer?" said the fox-faced one, with a grin.

"I don't know about the dinner, can give no opinion about that, not being on familiar terms with his digestive organs, but I can tell you what has not suited him nor his mental digestion—the conversation about Miss Dane."

"Whew! sets the wind in that quarter? I wonder if she is any relation?"

"His sister, or his cousin, or his aunt," sang the facetious one. "Maybe he has gone to hunt up a second, and call us out one by one."

He had not gone to do anything of the kind.

He had gone out to the stables to see the two horses he had out that day get their bucket of gruel apiece, and be bedded down.

To sit at the table and hear Miss Dane's name bandied about from lip to lip, to listen to speculations about the marriage of his wife, was rather too much to stand.

He had felt inclined to go round to the jolly-looking fellow with the black beard and knock him down, but still he asked and knock him down, but still he asked himself quite coolly, once he had soothed his feelings with a cigar,—

"Why the deuce should he? How were any of those cheery bachelors to know that Miss Dane's husband was sitting at the table?"

No, no; it was just as well for him, all things considered, that he had kept a quiet tongue in his head and not made a fool of himself, ardently as he had longed to throw a plate at his opposite neighbor.

He had wisely repressed this savage idea, and behaved with the discretion befitting his nine-and-twenty years.

Certainly things had come to a crisis, and Rosamond must at length be told.

He meant to tell her, but not quite so soon.

Whatever happened he hoped she had not precipitated herself into an engagement with this Croesus.

That would involve the tangled skein still further, and, bad as matters were, he saw very distinctly that they might still be worse.

CHAPTER XXII.

"THERE'S to be a grand fancy masked ball at a country house about five miles from this to-morrow," said Crabbie Campbell, button-holing Lord Kingsford late one evening in the smoking-room. "Everyone for counties round is going. I've leave to bring a friend. Will you come? Don't say no if you'd rather say yes."

Everyone! That would of course include Rosamond. Yes, he thought he would like to go.

He was dying to see her, and in a fancy dress and a mask he would say a few things to her that he dare not in his present character.

"But I've not got any fancy kit!" he objected, after a pause.

"Oh, don't let that stand in your way. Nathan, from London, has sent a boxful down on hire, all sorts and sizes, and you can suit yourself to the masthead."

"All right then, I'll go. I suppose we don't give our names?"

"No, not till two o'clock—supper-time—when everyone unmasks; and it's no end of fun!

"Such surprises people get! There are no end of larks to be had, especially if you know who some of the girls are, and what they mean to wear, as I do!" triumphantly.

"Ah! Of course you mean to pass your information on to me?" said his friend with prompt decision.

"Well, if mum is the word, I don't mind if I do. You see I'm rather sweet on two or three—a Miss Stewart, a Miss Falls, and Miss Glen."

"Is that all?" said the other, ironically. "I know Miss Glen. What is she going to appear in?"

"Oh, the Queen of the Fairies. No less and no more, and her friend is going as—what's this?—let me see," rubbing his forehead meditatively.

"Oh, I've got it now, an Austrian Chanoinesse, and there are both to wear long white dominos, with red stars on the right shoulder."

"You seem to have it all very pat! Pray how did you find out?"

"Oh easily enough!" exultantly. "I merely tipped the ladies' maid, and she tipped me, the straight one," laughing boisterously at his own joke.

Lord Kingsford listened attentively to the particulars of some other ladies' toilettes to disarm suspicion, but made particular note of the white domino and star in his own mind, and of course there'll be no difficulty in finding out Rosamond, as she is a good head the and taller of the two.

The next evening beheld him dressed in the very splendid uniform of an Austrian Hussar, and most becoming it proved to his slight figure, as his man remarked to himself when his master, taking up mask and gloves, and throwing a top-coat over his arm, hurried downstairs quickly, in answer to various shouts of "Come along, Kingsford," from the hall where half-a-dozen strange figures were assembled, notably, a French clown, who was jumping about and cutting all manner of queer capers for the benefit of the assembled company.

There was a long haired cavalier, rather uneasy about his wig; a very neat white cook, a Chinaman, a nigger minstrel, and a Spanish matador, but their light was quite put into the shade by the brilliant Hussar with clanking spurs and gold-laced jacket, who came down the hotel stairs last, but not least; in fact, as he descended they gave him "a hand," as they say in theatres, and quite a vigorous clapping was the welcome accorded him as he stood among them.

An omnibus conveyed the whole party from the Hall to the masked ball, and very lively they were; they sang and laughed, and talked and smoked, and chaffed each other, all but the Austrian Hussar, who sat in a far-up corner, his forage cap drawn over his eyes, his arms folded.

Evidently he was not in a merry mood; he was lost in his own thoughts, and debating in his mind what he would say to Rosamond when he met her.

They were rather late arrivals when they drove up to the brightly-lit Hall.

Carriages were flashing away from the door, the band was playing, and a high buzz of voices and a most motley air prevaded every hole and corner.

All the party masked and entered.

They, like everybody else, seemed looking round stealthily and warily, and ever on their guard for fear they should be found out; but after a while they, like the rest of the world, became emboldened, and plunged among the other guests, all glaring at each other with reckless audacity.

The white Hussar did not follow his companions; he stood, with his arms folded, in a distant doorway, alone, his eyes roving rapidly and eagerly round the room.

He saw no less than four editions of Mary Queen of Scots, three Follys, half-a-dozen Swiss peasants, half-a-dozen fairies, hospital nurses, vivandieres, summers, winters—but yes, there was one white domino—with three men in attendance, and the other one was dancing.

Gradually, carefully, he approached, by wary steering among the waiters, and found himself close beside her.

She was talking French, with much gesticulation, and with the most perfect ease. How different to her acquaintance with the tongue when they were in Paris years ago!

A tall, stout mask, Henry the Eighth, probably the 70,000-pounder, said Allan to himself, was standing by.

With the air of a proprietor and with a certain conscious pride in the fluent French of the fascinating Chanoinesse, Allan advanced now with a deep bow, and in the same language craved the honor of a dance.

The lady looked at him searchingly, and, after some remark, accorded him a waltz rather early on her programme.

"I wonder who you are?" she said, as she scribbled down the word Hussar opposite No. 10, with a laugh, "or if you have the faintest idea of who I am. It's more than probable, my good sir, that you mistake me for somebody else; and, remember, if you are not a good dancer, I shall throw you over, for I'm very particular!" she remarked, with all the license of a mask.

"I know you perfectly," said the mask, still in French. "I know your name, who you are, where you come from, and all your history since you were a little girl; and as to dancing," looking round the room superciliously, "if I could not dance better than some of the people here I should go out and put an end to myself."

"The foreigner crows bravely," said a deep voice, and Allan beheld Crabbie Campbell in his jester's dress, his tongue in his cheek, his hands in his pockets, standing among the circle, who, catching his eyes bestowed upon him one rapid-telling wink.

"The foreigner crows loudly enough, at any rate;" said Rosamond.

There was no doubt that it was Rosamond. He recognized her hands—her pretty, little slender hands.

"But give me deeds, not words. I will prove him," looking round. "You say, my good sir, that you know my history, that you can tell all my life since I was quite a little girl. Pray answer me one question. Where did I spend most of my time after I left school? What was the name of the place?"

"Drydd!" to her amazement dropped in one laconic syllable from beneath the stranger's black mustache.

"Yes, yes; I see you are a magician! I shall be quite afraid to dance with you."

It was someone she told herself, that knew her and her mother.

It was no secret that she had passed a good many years in that village among the Marshes, and her attention being taken off for an instant by another would-be suitor, when she turned her head again the Hussar was gone.

"Never mind," she said to herself, "I shall see him again at No. 10, and I shall cross-examine him well."

She had almost forgotten all about him when No. 10 came round, and advancing with a profound bow from some remote doorway the mysterious white Hussar claimed this, the Manola waltz; and, encircling her waist with a firm arm, they were soon swept away into the gay, eddying vortex.

The Chanoinesse (who had discarded her long white cloak) danced well, the Hussar still better.

He had not boasted overmuch; he was her best partner of the evening, as he steered skillfully in and out, never losing step, never getting out of time, hold her just steadily and firmly.

She cast her mind at once among all her acquaintances, to see who this excellent dancer might be.

Nothing in his step, or anything about him, reminded her of anyone she knew.

He was tall, and had dark hair and eyes; it was not Lord Kingsford's; he never danced.

It was someone who knew her.

"Who are you?" she said, with a laugh, showing all her pearl teeth beneath the lace of her mask, as, after a long spin, they paused for a few moments under the orchestra, but to this question the mask only replied by shaking his head in a very decided manner.

"But you know you will have to declare yourself after supper, so you may just as well declare yourself now."

"Come along," he said, in English this time; "don't let us lose any more of this delicious waltz," and thus adjured, she equally ready, once more floated off, and this time they kept it up to the very last bar.

"Yes must have some refreshment," said the mask, leading her rather imperiously towards a distant refreshment-room.

"No, no—thanks; I had an ice just now; but probably it's one for me and two for yourself," smiling.

"No? Then let us come and sit in the winter garden and get cool."

To this proposition she made no demur, and, arm-in-arm, they went down a long corridor, into an enormous dimly-lit but still sufficiently light conservatory, which was already pretty full.

The mask evidently knew his way about, and conducted her to a retired bench, half hidden, and yet not quite concealed, by a big Australian tree fern, and on which an adjacent colored lantern threw a sufficiency of light, while the music of a fountain close at hand lent its pleasant, drowsy, dreamy, trickling noise to the whole scene, and a statue of the god Cupid, blindfolded, but with one eye peeping under the handkerchief, superintended, as it were, personally this charming little corner, where any moderately clever couple could see and hear everybody, and remain unperceived themselves.

"You can remove your mask if you are hot," said the Hussar coolly, as he took a seat beside her. "No one can see you here."

"Except you," with a laugh, fanning herself rapidly.

"It does not matter about me in the least. Let me look at your hand, and I'll tell you who you are."

"You make me quite afraid of you," holding out her right hand as she spoke "but you are not as wise as you think you are."

He turned it over quite gravely, but with an air of deep respect, and said—

"You are Miss Dane—Miss Rosamond Dane?"

"I wonder how you found that out. Supposing I say I am not."

"You would be quite right—you are not, in reality."

"And, pray, what else do you take me for? You may have two guesses, playfully.

"I don't want to guess; I know."

"You are very wise," ironically.

"I am," expressively, "wiser than most. You pass as unmarried to the world at large, but, in reality, you have been married for years. You see Mrs. Allan Gordon."

At this announcement—made to her by the hussar in a low voice, leaning confidentially towards her—she uttered a little smothered exclamation, and dropped her fan at his feet. He picked it up very carefully, and, handing it back to her, said—

"Am I right or not?"

"You are in one sense, and not in another; but how did you find out my secret? There is only one person in the world who knows it besides myself and two women. He has told you!" she exclaimed, removing the mask with hurried fingers, and revealing great startled eyes, flaming with indignation, and a face as white as her gown.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

Lost on the Road.

BY CHARLES REED.

CHAPTER I.

"AS if I was not sure I heard a child crying loudly, Mills."

"Oh my, Master Fairfax, you're fanciful."

"It's not fancy. Do just listen for while, Mills."

At this the woman turned her head, with its twinkling black eyes, on one side.

The boy, rather a handsome little fellow, about nine years old, tall and strong for his age, did the same, and held up a chubby finger to impose silence.

"There it is again, Mills, and didn't you hear it cry 'Dada?'" said the boy.

"Well, I almost think as I did 'ear somethin', but wherever be you a-gon? I never see such a boy, never."

For ere her speech was half concluded, little Fairfax Otway had scrambled through the hedge that divided their own plantations from the high road, and was yelling at the pitch of his young voice to his nurse.

"I can't come through that 'ere hole, Master Fairfax. Whatever be you thinking of?" expostulated the woman.

"But I've found her. Here, come along, little girl, don't cry.

"I'll take care of you," and panting with eager haste, the boy again appeared through the gap in the fence, dragging after him a pretty, fair child.

Yes, pretty, in spite of rags and dirt, pretty, notwithstanding the smears down the wet cheeks, the blackberry-stained lips, the rueful countenance, and the poor, torn apparel,

Fairfax Otway saw that the eyes were full and blue, as those in his dead sister's doll, so carefully hidden away in the nursery press, and that the hair, too, in spite of its uncombed condition, was bright and golden as little Minna's had been.

"Master Fairfax! Whatever next?" expostulated Mills. "You've no business to bring that little dirty creature in 'ere; take her back directly."

"I shan't," cried the boy, fiercely. "You're lost on the road, aren't you, little girl?"

"Ye-es," sobbed the child, clinging to her young champion.

"Never mind, don't cry any more," and he stooped to kiss away the tears. "I'll take you home with me to my mamma; come along, this is the way."

And in spite of Mills's expostulations, he hurried to the house, dragging the child with him.

Long before poor Mills, who was rather stout and heavy, could overtake them, Fairfax had run up the wide, white steps, across the handsome marble hall, and was in the presence of a lady, very young and fair, who sat writing in the large drawing-room.

"Mamma, mamma," cried the breathless child, "I've found a little sister. I've brought you a little Minna—oh, she's so like, isn't she, mamma? Do keep her."

The lady addressed had turned her head at the entrance of the children.

Her face blanched as she looked at the new comer.

The ready tears rushed to her eyes.

"Fairfax, my dear boy, where did you find her? She is, indeed, like my poor little lost girl. But so ragged, so dirty. Come, little one, and tell me how you got into this sad plight?"

She drew the child tenderly to her, but she was too young to be explicit, she "had been for a ride with dada.

Dada had left her somhow.

She had come a long way in the cart, had gone after the blackberries, etc."

Nothing more lucid or explanatory could be obtained from the small damsel.

As to the name of the place whence she had come, or of any more explicit title than dada, this was not to be arrived at.

So the boy had his way.

The little foundling obtained a good home at Sedbury Park, a kind mother in Mrs. Otway, and much affection from the general, her husband, who was considerably his wife's senior, while, as for Fairfax, her young discoverer, his idolatry seemed to increase as years rolled on, and all to be lavished at the shrine of the pretty little waif and stray, who had crept into the shoes of his dead sister, Minna, for strange to say, no inquiries respecting the lost child had ever penetrated to Sedbury Park.

CHAPTER II.

"TWELVE year come next Michaelmas since I lost her. Aye, poor little Molly. I misdoubt me but the daisies covers her afore this," and the old gray-haired man puffed at his pipe, blinked his eyes, and scowled his white, overhanging brows to conceal the tears that after all this interval would come forth, when he spoke of his little grandchild.

"Well, it's many a year since I was in this part, neighbor," quoth the sailor friend.

"Thirteen about, for our good ship has been to the Pacific, and tossing about in many countries, but I mind the little lass well. I give her a small ship as I rigged, mate, don't 'ee re'ollect now?"

"Aye, that do I, and how you smacked the poor little lass 'cause she fell into the burn a-sailin' of it."

An old woman in a mob cap and clean print gown, who sat making lace at the window, nodded her head, and the white-haired man continued—

"As you was a-saying, friend, 'twas a strange loss, and I'll tell 'ee all I can about it.

"Our Bob—Bob Hale, her father—you mind him?—he were never steady, not a bad-hearted chap, but too much give up to idle courses. Well, he had no wife, for our poor girl died, and only this bit of a bairn: his ways ain't our ways, and he lives over the blacksmith's shop, shoes horses and such like, but is more often drunk than sober.

"Well, he've had a rare hankerin' to go to furrin parts, but he were uncommon fond in his way; of the child, and would come in of a evenin' and play with her by the hour together.

"As ill-luck would 'ave it, I ketches cold and gets laid up with a rheumatic attack, so as I can't go with my cart to and from Bushmere, as I used.

"Down comes Bob, as civil as you please, and he'd go for me. Well, I was mighty afraid, 'cos of the drink, but he does it right enough for four days.

"On the fifth, a bright, sunny morning nothin' will do but little Mary must go along of him; so the pretty lass, right well pleased, goes. They never comes back."

The old man held up both trembling hands—

"No, they never comes home no more, and the Lord only knows what come to 'em."

"But the horse and cart? You found them mate?" asks the sailor.

"Aye, we found 'em, tracked 'em some thirty mile from 'ere—near Portsmouth, where I don't doubt as Bob had embarked for some furrin country and took the child with him."

The friend shook his had.

"He might work his passage over, but the little un——"

"You don't think as they went abroad, Norris?" asked the old man, quickly.

"Well, Mr. Hardy, it ain't for me to say; he might have had money to pay for the little un's passage, you know?"

"Well, that's possible, that's just possible; but Robert was never a man to save, though so long as our poor Mary lived, they kept a roof over their heads. Still, I won't say as you're wrong."

"At all events, from that day to this, you've never set eyes on the child?"

"No, Mr. Norris," quoth the old dame, breaking, with quavering voice, into the conversation, "we've never seen our sweet little lass since the day as Robert set off to to go to Bushmere, and instead of returning home, went on to Portsmouth.

"'Twere not for want of asking, neither; for when my good man traced the horse and cart to the Bell Inn there, and found by description as 'twas Bob left it, he went on to the docks—didn't he, George?"

"Ees, ees, surely"—and the old man took up the tale—"I went on to the docks, as Sairey says, and tried to make out the ships as had sailed, and who'd sailed in 'em.

"But if 'twas him, 'twas in another name. There was a Harley in the 'Albatross,' and I couldn't but think 'twas the same, and he'd altered his name on purpose as we shouldn't trace 'im; but there were no child with him. However, I thought mayhap he'd smuggled the little lass somehow."

Norris nodded his head thoughtfully for a few minutes.

Then Mrs. Hardy said—

"I wouldn't so much be' minded givin' up the little lass, if Robert had been a different man, but though fond enough o' the child when sober, he might not ha' been so when the drink was in him."

"Oh, Mrs. Hardy," replied the friend, soothingly, "he'd be another man out there, mayhap.

"My poor brother as went to the bad in England, was a changed man, a-sheep farmin' in Orstraly. The Lord would protect the blessed child, mum."

"Aye, Mr. Norris, you be right," cried the old man. "It's a strange thing, but I never drives my cart 'ome from Bushmere at night, but I fancies as I hears her pretty voice a-callin'—'Dada,' or 'Grappa.' And in the wailin' o' the wind her cry comes up right piteous.

"Good Lord! and to think as it's nigh upon twelve year agone, and the pretty soul, if she ain't one o' God's angels, is now a tall young woman. Mercy me! 'tis 'ard to think them as you lost in childhood don't keep children forever."

CHAPTER III.

"LET her pack up her traps and be off to them that own her; a beggar's brat, to toss her head and set up her back at our son," growled old General Otway, blinking his eyes angrily, and gnawing at the white beard that encircled his mouth.

"Oh, hush, hush!" cried his kind wife, in sore distress, for there in the doorway stood Minna, and by the glazing of terror in the blue eye, by the quivering of the delicate lips, and by the anguish written on every feature, it was evident that she had overheard the old general's hasty speech.

"Minna," cried Mrs. Otway.

But ere the word had left her mouth, the girl had turned and fled.

"Henry; how can you be so bitter, so cruel?" she said, for her, quite sharply, and then followed her foster-child.

She found her in her little bedroom, standing by the window overlooking the park, dangerously tearless and composed.

Mrs. Otway would have augured better had she found her in tears.

"Minna, dearest," she said, persuasively, "the general is vexed that you will not yield to Fairfax. Men are hasty and unreasonable; he does not mean the bitter things he says."

Minna turned round slowly, and Mrs. Otway did not like the still look on her face the tearless glitter of her eye.

"He called me a beggar's brat; am I a beggar's brat, mamma, do you think?"

"No, no, love, that was his temper; the general loves you, or he would not wish you to marry his son; think no more of it."

"I cannot marry Fairfax, mamma, because we have grown up together; it seems horrible, unnatural."

"Ah, my darling, but that is a girl's fancy; there is no tie of blood between you, and he has set his heart upon you. Surely that letter this morning ought to have moved you, Minna?"

"Oh, mamma, Fairfax is all that is good and noble, the best man in the world, but," she sighed, "I have always looked on him as a brother.

"I wish I could go back to those that own me as papa—I mean, the general said"—and she colored.

"Minna, dear, call him papa, as you have always done; we have been as parents to you."

"Yes, till Fairfax wished me to be his wife; but you are kind, mamma"—she nestled close to the loving heart—"I should grieve to leave you, but it would be better. Oh, mamma, I have been trying to think, and I cannot remember where I lived I came to you, or I would go back."

"Nonsense, love!" cried Mrs. Otway, caressing her, and she fancied the storm had blown over; but when night came, and darkness—the darkness of a summer's night—fell upon Sedbury, the wounded spirit chafed sorely at the words she had overheard.

"A beggar's brat! Why does she not pack up her traps and be off to them that own her!"

Oh! it was a bitter sting! too bitter to bear and leaving a loving farewell for the kind woman who had been as a mother to her, poor Minna stole forth into the pitiless chill of a wet autumn night, to fight her way, if possible, back to the good old soul of whom her childhood had some dim recollection.

On, on, she walked—two miles, three—till she came to a town.

There she begged a bed at a small inn where she was not known, and, having a little money in her purse, she doubted not she should be able to make her way on.

On—but where?

Oh, kind fortune would befriend her.

The next day she asked the names of the towns around, and, hearing that of Bushmere, paused as if struck by its sound.

Could she have a fly to go there?

The man opened his eyes.

"A fly, miss! Why, 'tis more nor twenty mile from 'ere. If so be as you wanted to get there, you'd best drive to Murfield, and there take the train."

Minna assented, and, following out this direction, was in less than three hours at Bushmere.

Ah! now all seemed very familiar to her.

The white-steepled church, the old red brick rectory, and, why, that was the very inn where her good old grandfather used to put up his carrier's cart.

She hurried thither.

"The old carrier, miss," repeated the old ostler, scratching his head; "do 'ee mean old Hardy?"

"Yes, yes," cried the girl, clasping her hands—how the name came back to her.

"Well, sure, and he've left 'ere this half hour—'twere his day."

"Can you let me have a fly to drive to his house?"

"Well," replies the man, doubtfully, "'tis a matter of ten or twelve mile, but I'll ask master."

"Can't do it," said the host, a surly man, coming to look at the travel-worn female, and doubting the security of his money; "very sorry, miss, but our horses are all gone to the races nigh here!"

This was false.

"Oh, he goes slowly, I can catch him, half an hour, did you say?" she asked.

The ostler nodded, biting a straw in his mouth, and staring at the pertinacious inquirer.

Was she mad?

But ere he had answered the latter question satisfactorily to himself, the girl was off.

She had not gone a mile, when a heavy storm came on.

Cold, biting sleet and driving rain, but still poor Minna, mad with anxiety and terror, kept on.

And perhaps to this turn in the weather she owed her good fortune, for there, sheltered beneath a spreading oak, she found the cart and horse, another horse, time does not stand still with animals, and stooping, as though to pick a stone from its foot, was an old man in a thick great coat, mumbling to himself.

"Well, here's a pretty pickle. A precious storm, and you turned as lame as you can, Jock. How are we to get home to-night?"

"Grandfather!"

The old man heard the cry and wheeled round.

Poor Minna had drawn the hood of her cloak over her head, till it almost shrouded her features, but would he, who had dwelt on her bonnie face, for twelve years, not know his child?

"Molly, my darlin' bairn," he cried.

She was in his arms in a minute.

The old name sounded very strangely familiar.

The cloud rolled away from between them, and Minna recalled to the full, in that moment, that "blood is stronger than water."

Even Jock seemed to catch the infection of happiness, and trotted lamely home to Meadowcroft, with his burden of delight behind him.

CHAPTER IV.

IT was a merry Christmas at Meadowcroft, for that old Hardy had found his grandchild was soon noised abroad, and all the neighbors came to have a peep at her, and wish them joy.

But it seems that poor human nature can never be content, for so long accustomed to an atmosphere of purity and refinement at Sedbury Park, Minna shrank from equality with the simple souls around her.

There was something repulsive in the rough grasp of the men.

The rude kisses of the women showered on her as an equal, who had been for so long a time away from them.

To her grandparents the loving heart returned with all the warmth of her youth, but beyond it she could not extend the feeling.

Minna had been brought up as a lady, and as a lady she naturally shrank from being "Hail fellow, well met!" with the lower class.

To her horror, "Muster" Norris, the mate of the Australian ship, the "Herefordshire," her childhood's admirer, became particular in his attentions, and Miss Mary, as he politely called her, then recoiled with far greater horror than she had done from the overtures of Fairfax Otway.

Indeed now, she often cast a sigh back to her old life, her dear friends left forever, and as Fairfax became more of a stranger so his memory grew dearer, his sun in the ascendant.

She had not said farewell to Sedbury two months before she sighed capriciously for the refined home she had left forever.

Never had she felt so strangely out of place, so terribly lonely, for there was no communion of feeling between her and her new friends.

Minna shrank from being called "Molly."

She pined for her rosewood desk, inlaid with mother-of-pearl, her work-box of delicate white wood, clamped with steel fittings her numberless dainty little treasures left behind her at Sedbury Park.

Now on this Christmas Eve a number of friends and neighbors were to assemble in Hardy's kitchen, there to celebrate the season, and the return of the prodigal.

Verily for her the "fatted calf" was to be killed, and there was to be great rejoicing.

Good Dame Hardy was up to her ears in the manufacture of mince pies and syllabub puffing and red over the fire in the large stone kitchen, in spite of falling snow outside.

The old carrier stamped in every now and then, his aged face ruddy with the cold, blowing on his fingers and cracking his joke.

"Now, Mary, do stir thyself, there's a good wench," quoth the dame, to the listless girl who stood leaning against the latticed pane, looking somewhat mournfully across the little farmyard, watching the old lady plucking her geese, as Hardy laughingly called the white snow flakes.

"Do stir thyself, now, and run across to the hen-house, and see if that cuckoo Lorking have laid her egg, for I'm running main short."

"But it's snowing, grandmother," cried Minna, opening her eyes.

The old dame laughed.

"Snowing," and she mimicked the accent of horror: "snowing! well what if it be? 'Twon't melt you gal. Take my old cloak there and put on them pattens."

With a face, pallid as genuine disgust could make it, poor Minna obeyed, and for the hundredth time sorely regretted the folly that had induced her to leave all the refinement of Sedbury Park for the rough homeliness of Meadowcroft.

But there, she had done it now, and it was of no use to waste such bitter repentance upon it.

* * * * *

The evening came, and with it the fiddlers who were to scrape a merry jig on their discordant instruments, for the good folks to "foot it away," in the large stone kitchen.

Then came some rosy, buxom lasses in clean white frocks, and many a sheepish lad in sprigged waistcoat and dancing shoes, with his hair still wet and shining sleeked upon his low forehead.

And many was the admiring glance and jocund compliment expended on poor Minna, who colored and shrank back at the rough familiarity.

Then there was the odious mistletoe, suspended from the ceiling, beneath which many pairs of lovers stole a kiss.

Minna would neither dance nor suffer herself to approach it, for she mistrusted Caleb Norris's leer of affection.

She had sprained her ankle, she pleaded, and presently she quietly stole away from the busy scene of merriment to the front part of the house, where, in a dark corner, she stood and wearily pressed her head against the window-pane.

"Oh, how foolish I was," she sighed. "If I could only go back to Sodbury Park? Ah but the general would tell me to go about my business, and rightly too," she added, bitterly; "and Fairfax, dear Fairfax, my darling brother."

Here she put her white hands to her face and sobbed.

Then there came a tapping at the window beside her.

She started and recoiled

Two faces were looking in.

"Who are you?" she cried, trembling.

"Let us in, little girl, and we'll soon tell you; don't keep us out in the cold."

Almost before the words were out of the general's mouth, the door was opened and Minna weeping in his arms.

"Hush, hush, my bairn, what now?" cooed the old soldier, softly. "What, ran away from your daddy for a few harsh words?

"Pooh, forget and forgive. Here Fairfax you can comfort this girl better than I can, take her."

Minna blushed and hung back, but Fairfax Otway clasped and held her close to his heart till somehow she clung there, and felt a new feeling grow within her, probably due to absence and pining, certainly one that had never been there before for her foster-brother.

"Darling," he whispered, pressing his lips to hers. "Thank God, we've found you at last. You'll never leave us again, Minna?"

"If you care to have me, never, Fairfax, never," and the young man felt by the warmth of the words and the strength of her caress, that the dear love of his life was now his forever.

It required very little persuasion to induce the jolly old general to join that Christmas party, and Minna's ankle seemed wonderfully to have recovered its strength as she danced "down the middle and up again," with her chosen lover, so gallant and handsome, she might well feel proud of him.

Caleb Norris found consolation in a rosy-cheeked damsel, and frolicked away with the rest of them, so that Minna had not his broken heart on her conscience, and the whole evening culminated in a grand kissing under the mistletoe, in which Minna was entirely monopolised by the general and his son, and the evening concluded with the cheery parting of the guests, and from all sides resounded "A merry Christmas, a merry Christmas!"

* * * * * *

A letter from Robert Hale, in Australia, arrived the following week.

It stated that his old thirst for drink had overpowered him, and on his way to Portsmouth, he had stayed so long in a public-house that he had lost the child, and although he had meant to take her with him abroad then, he dared not show his face at home, but trusted the baby would fall among kind people.

He was now dying, and hoped to be forgiven for all his sins.

Minna had no recollection of her father, but she looked very grave, as became her.

Fairfaxtput his arm round her.

"My poor darling; we must freely forgive him, for out of evil comes ofttimes good; had it not been for that terrible vice, what happiness might not I have missed, since you would never have been "Lost on the Road."

As in in every other profession or business, there is a field for woman's individual labor. The woman who can design her own dresses and adapt them to the style, age, and condition of her customers, holds rank among the artists of the day. There are conventional dress-makers — those who make their dresses after the French fashion-plates, utterly regardless of the characteristics of their customers—and there are women, too, who can with impunity wear these conventional clothes; while the great majority of wearers of gowns have a great and intense longing for garments entirely their own, not patterned exactly after those worn by their neighbors.

Dress-makers, with ideas and sense, and judgment enough to carry them out, are what we need. By merest chance we now and then fall upon an artistic dress-maker, who believes that the rules which govern art in other things should govern it in regard to covering and adorning the human body. Such a dress-maker enhances the beauty of the figure and diminishes the defects, not by padding, which is insufferable, but by judicious selections of styles and artistic arrangements of folds and fulnesses.

"THERE are five persons in the car and only four fares!" said the conductor as he opened the door. All the passengers looked up at each other, and a man who sat reading a paper slowly turned to his wife and queried:—"Why, dear, didn't you pay your own fare when we got in? You are becoming very absent-minded!"

He who seeks exclusively his own interests will never find them, for they lie not in the path he is pursuing. Duty to others and an enlightened self-love teach the same lessons.

The Defeated Plot.

BY E. LINWOOD SMITH.

MRS. ELSINGTON reclined in an attitude of the most perfect grace and ease on one of the low velvet couches that were drawn up before the fire.

She was a magnificently beautiful woman, and proud and vain, as such women cannot help being.

Her complexion made her look twenty years younger than she really was, and made you wonder if it could be possible that she was the mother of the tall, blonde young fellow that came lazily in.

You saw the resemblance between them at a glance.

It was worship—nothing short of it—the feeling she entertained for her manly, independent son, especially and particularly since his return, not a fortnight since, from a three years' tour.

Rich Elsington had never done but one thing that grieved his mother, and even that, now, seemed a thing of the far distant past, so long as Rich's three years' absence laid between him and what his mother considered his folly; what Rich had come to think a very sharp stroke of Destiny; what really was — the engagement that had existed between him and Cora Baldwin when he went away—the love affair that had been a thorn in the flesh of Mrs. Elsington until Rich had gone over the seas.

He came in, his fair, frank face lighted with the proud smile with which he always welcomed his lady-mother.

"I am glad you are not busy, mother. I feared you would be so absorbed, that my time had not yet come to ask you a very important question."

Mrs. Elsington wondered at the growing seriousness of his handsome face.

"Sit down, Rich. You have asked several questions in the two weeks you have been at home, and I have answered them all—haven't I? I think one more will not be an impossibility."

Rich walked to the low marble mantel, and leaned his arm carelessly against it, his earnest face slightly inclined towards his mother, and his eyes looking into hers.

"It's about Cora, mother. What has become of her?"

For one little instant Mrs. Elsington's heart throbbed violently.

"Oh, Cora? Why, you knew Baldwin had been detected in a gigantic fraud, didn't you? Mrs. Baldwin died just after of a broken heart at her husband's disgrace, and Cora -let me see—yes, I am quite sure, she married some time ago—a year or so since, if I am not mistaken."

"Married, married! Mother you make the announcement as if you forgot how I loved her. My little Cora married? Well——"

He compressed his lips.

For all Cora Baldwin had ceased writing to him very shortly after he had gone away; for all he had come gradually to know there was something wrong somewhere, and the probability that Cora had ceased to care for him; yet, on the heels of all this, his mother's announcement went home with a thrill of pain and regret.

After a silence that seemed to Mrs. Elsington hours, so keenly were her memories at work with their merciless reminder, Rich spoke.

"Cora Baldwin was the only girl I ever loved, and she, like all the rest, has played me false on the first occasion. Mother, when you gave her the letters I enclosed, what did she say? She never answered them after a few months."

Mrs. Elsington's cheeks flushed slightly.

"Rich, you must not ask me anything about it. It is enough that she is married, and nothing to you hereafter. Dear, will you be my escort this afternoon? I will ring for luncheon at once if you will."

And so Cora Baldwin's name was hushed between the two.

* * * * *

"Papa!"

A voice as low and silvery as the tune of a throstle, with tender contralto cadences lingering round the word she whispered as she bent over a lounge where a feeble-limbed, white-haired old man was lying.

"Yes, Cora; I am not asleep. You want me for anything?"

It was a fine face, for all the seams and lines drawn on it by care, trouble, and pain.

"Only to tell you I have succeeded at last, papa. Papa, tell me you are so pleased."

Mr. Baldwin's lips quivered.

"My darling, my noble, brave darling, to think how you have worked and slaved ——"

She interrupted him in playful protest.

"Slaved! Now, papa, that is all the thanks I get for keeping myself pretty for you. Honor bright, now, do I look as if I had been worked to death?"

Her bright face was all aglow, and her brown eyes seemed overflowing with joyousness; and Mr. Baldwin's face lightened a moment under her magnet'sm.

"My princess, to think you should cling to me, when all the world believes me guilty of——"

"Papa, we agreed never to discuss that. You know all the world couldn't make me believe it of you, and even if it had been true, didn't you let all you had in the world go to make good the deficiency? Papa, tell me, what do you think of my position at Thilman's establishment?"

Mr. Baldwin groaned.

"Thilman's! Cora—you a Baldwin—common fitter of the very women who have scorned you since——"

Cora laughed blithely.

"Why, papa, I shall have a lovely time. I won't be in the shop at all, mademoiselle said, but will go to the houses of the customers, and let them select their patterns and fit them, and take their orders."

She was putting on her hat and veil before the looking-glass, and then turned to him.

"I promised Mademoiselle Thilman I'd begin at once. She's very busy, and the sooner I go the sooner the salary begins. I'll be in at six, papa."

She kissed his forehead and patted his white hair with a thoughtful, motherly air that made it seem that the two had changed their relative position towards each other; and then she went out, and outside the door the smiles all vanished from her face, and the glow from her eyes, for there was no need to assume the semblance of happiness that was so essential before her father.

Yet Cora's step was firm and decisive as she went along the crowded streets to Thilman's establishment, where a line of carriages stood at the curbstones.

The forewoman gave Cora her orders at once.

There were three ladies to be visited that afternoon, and measures and orders to be taken; and Cora had three addresses written, at all of which she was required to report within two hours.

The first took very little time, so Cora went to the second address on her card.

She was ushered in by the pompous footman in livery, who showed her into Madame's boudoir.

In the soft perfumed twilight she discerned a queenly woman sitting beside the fire, reading languidly; at a window, a gentleman looking out.

Then the lady turned in her chair, and bestowed a glance on her that her pet white poodle might have resented as the essence of indifference.

"The young person from Madame Thilman's? Just ring the bell, yonder, for my maid to attend to the patterns."

Cora's heart bounded.

It was Mrs. Elsington—Rich Elsington's mother!

All the exquisite color faded from her sweet face in the agitation of the moment, but her brave, proud eyes more than compensated in the fire that leaped to them.

But her voice was perfectly even as she answered—

"Thank you, Mrs. Elsington. I will ring the bell."

She had thrown back her veil.

There was a feeling in her heart that she would meet her new destiny face to face, with not even a sheet of gauze between.

So she walked to the bell-rope, with her eyes glaring like lamps, her lips firmly compressed, her little bare hand extended towards the blue silken tassel—just as the curtains of the window stirred, and Rich Elsington stepped out, hurriedly, eagerly, with a bewilderment on his face that changed to perfect bliss as he rushed up to her.

"Cora! Cora! My own little girl—little Cora Baldwin!"

Then, when the sharp, sudden pallor of surprise, and bitter memories of his neglect of her, surged over his face as she paused just where his startling words arrested her—when he saw that, Rich suddenly remembered what his mother had said—Cora was married—Cora was nothing to him again.

Mrs. Elsington sprang from her low, luxurious chair.

"What do you mean by such wild nonsense, Rich?"

She felt the blood receding from her cheeks as Cora's clear voice answered—

"He means nothing, madam; I am awkward not to explain I am no longer a friend of Mr. Rich Elsington—simply Miss Baldwin, of Mademoiselle Thilman's establishment."

There was a ring almost of defiance in her tones, and she turned coldly to her package of patterns.

Rich dashed them right and left, his eager handsome face all alight.

"Don't touch the patterns, mother. Cora, I want to know what it means. Mother, you told me she was married. Cora, Cora, my darling, tell me——"

Mrs. Elsington leaned her haughty head among the cushions, and smiled sarcastically. Cora drew her proud figure up.

"If you please, Mr. Elsington — not yours. Do you suppose I would even so much acknowledge one who has acted as you have done? Did you not cease your letters as soon as—as poor papa's trouble came—the very time I needed a friend? Did I not write you five letters begging to know wherein I had offended you, and reiterating words whose memory makes my face burn? Mr. Elsington, we will drop the subject."

Rich's face was pale as death and his blue eyes had in them a stern gleam that effectually routed the idea of letting the subject drop.

He stepped nearer the girl, his head bent in a peculiar earnest way he had.

"Cora, there has been a fearful mistake. For a year I wrote to you under cover of my mother, and never heard a line from you—never knew of your family troubles until my return—a fortnight ago. Cora, in my letters I reiterated confessions of love that I am not ashamed to repeat; Cora, can it be as it was before I went away? Cora, Cora! must I lose my darling after all?"

His face was full of pleading passion, and his low, earnest voice thrilled her heart as no voice ever had done or could do.

A second, then she lifted her glorious eyes.

"Rich, it never has been anyone but you—it never will be."

Right before his mother's coolly smiling eyes Rich took the girl in his arms and kissed her.

Then he turned to Mrs. Elsington, who sat like a queen, waiting for the sentence that she knew would dethrone her—smiling to the last.

"Mother, there has been a blunder somewhere. I shall never ask where; it is enough that my happiness has come to me, and none but God himself can take it from me. We can afford to forget, it—can't we, my darling?"

And Cora thought they could.

There never could have been better friends than Mrs. Elsington and her daughter-in-law; because Mrs. Elsington confessed it all, and gave to Cora all the letters that had never gone further than the secret drawer of her escritoire; and she has come to the conclusion that, after all, Rich's folly was the wisest sort of wisdom—hard though she tried to prevent it, for foolish reasons of her own.

Scientific and Useful.

FLIES.—Half a pint of boiling water poured upon a quarter of an ounce of quassia-chips and sweetened with sugar or treacle will destroy flies, and is perfectly harmless to human beings or animals.

INVISIBLE INK.—To make invisible ink, take linseed oil, 1 part; water of ammonia, 20 parts; pure water, 100 parts. Mix thoroughly and shake well before using. To make the writing appear, dip the paper in water. The characters fade as the paper dries.

BRASS AND GLASS.—For cementing brass on glass there is recommended a resin soap made by boiling one part of caustic soda, three parts of colophonium (resin) and five parts of water and, finally, kneading the whole in about half the quantity of plaster of Paris. It is well suited for fastening brass tops on brass lamps.

SPOTS ON CLOTH.—An excellent tincture to remove spots from woolen cloth is made of alcohol 90 per cent., sulphate of naphtaline, French oil of turpentine, spirits of sal-ammoniac and soapwort. The latter must be boiled, sieved, mixed with the other four ingredients and bottled. To remove spots of tar, resin or wax, soapwort can be dispensed with, the other chemicals being sufficiently effective.

ALUM IN FLOUR.—A simple but infallible test for alum in flour: If a portion of adulterated flour is placed in a small quantity of chloroform the flour floats, while the alum or other mineral matter sinks to the bottom. In a similar way alum in bread may be instantly detected by placing a small piece of the suspected loaf in a solution of log-wood and carbonate of ammonia; if alum be present the bread will turn blue.

TO WHITE ON STEEL.—Clean the steel with some oil and cover its surface with a layer of molten beeswax. A sharp-pointed stick is used to write on the wax, so as to lay bare the parts of the metal which have to retain the writing. The parts thus exposed are covered by means of a brush with a mixture of six parts nitric acid and one part muriatic acid. After five minutes the metal is placed in water in order to stop the further action of the acid mixture.

Farm and Garden.

SETTING HENS.—To break up setting hens have seven pens, one for each day of the week, then all hens found wanting to set on any day of the week should be put in the pen corresponding to that day. Keep them in five days. By this arrangement it is easily told how long each hen or pen of hens have been in.

THE SOIL.—Nitrogen and phosphoric acid are the most costly and most potent elements in fertilization, and in many soils they are the only element which need to be supplied. Hence, such dung of animals as supplies the greatest quantity of these elements is the most valuable. The fresh dung of swine when they are well fed is richer in these two substances than that of horses, sheep or cattle.

POLISH FOR PINE WOOD.—A wash of one part nitric acid in ten parts water will impart a stain resembling mahogany to pine wood that does not contain much rosin. When the wood is thoroughly dry, shellac varnish will impart a fine polish to the surface. A glaze of carmine or lake will produce a rosewood finish. A turpentine extract of alkanet root produces a beautiful stain which admits of French polishing. Asphaltum, thinned with turpentine, makes an excellent mahogany color on new work.

FARMING IN BELGIUM.—The magnificent farming of Belgium has often been referred to by writers. It is necessity in that country, as in others of Europe, that makes men get every cent's worth possible from the land, and so careful farming comes about. In Belgium it is also due first, to the perfection of both plow and spade work; second, each field has a perfection of shape given to it to facilitate cultivation and drainage; third, most careful husbanding of the manures; fourth, the great variety of crops, especially of industrial plants, such as colza, flax, tobacco, hops, chicory, etc.; fifth, second, or "stolen" crops, such as turnips and carrots, English clover, sparry, etc., whereby the cultivated area is in effect increased one third; sixth, abundance of food for cattle. The soil is not favorable to meadows, yet taking the second crop into count, one-half the available superficies is devoted to the keeping of live stock. Seventh, house feeding of cattle, by which the cows give both more milk and more nature. Eighth, minute weeding.

THE SATURDAY EVENING POST.

SIXTY-FOURTH YEAR.

SATURDAY EVENING, DEC. 27, 1884.

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CHRISTMAS TIDE.

The good old custom of celebrating Christmas time still holds its own, and in spite of all adverse influences, appears likely to do so for ages yet unborn.

As the anniversary of the birth of the Founder of the religion professed by the most powerful and intellectual races of mankind, its observance is with the majority a duty impressed on them by their religious belief.

It marks the era when Paganism and all its vices shrunk abashed at the rise of Christianity, and a new and purer code of morality was presented to the world.

Again, then, we welcome the coming of Christmas. What heart so sad, what life so lowly, that a thought of cheer and of joy does not lighten the load when we feel that Christmas is present! Christmas meetings, Christmas dinners and celebrations keep up the memories of home which might, perhaps, wither without the freshness of thought imparted at such reunions.

There can be no doubt that at Christmas time we are more willing than usual to listen to the prompting of our hearts, and encourage kindly sentiments toward each other.

The prominent idea which fills the minds of all who reflect, and of multitudes who do not reflect, is that of a rubbing off old scores with all, of beginning again with new hopes and aspirations, and of a celebration of the compact with ourselves and the world by hospitality, good fellowship, good wishes and kindly greetings.

To children, Christmas is an especial delight. Already young hearts beat joyously at the thought of the approaching festival. Already the bright eyes grow brighter, and the innocent lips of happy children quiver and ripple into a smile, as they see mysterious packages left at the door.

The Christmas tree needs no descriptive touches from our pen. Already the days and hours are being counted until the moment arrives when the earnest young faces can catch a sight of the treasures that load its green boughs, and of the wonderful show they have been eagerly looking forward to for weeks.

In the happiness of Christmas rejoicings, let us remember "the poor we have always with us." It must be, indeed, a cold and narrow heart that cannot, at this happy, glad season, become warm and open as a blossom in springtime.

To help the poor, cheer the mournful, and make happy the dear ones of the domestic circle, by gifts according to our means, and congratulations and kind words as our hearts prompt, are not these enjoyments the bread of life and the wine of love that strengthen the best energies of the soul?

SANCTUM CHAT.

THE recent election decided that church property will hereafter be taxed in Washington Territory.

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HOUSE rents in Arabia are nearly as low as in a deserted Pennsylvania oil town. A French traveler mentions his taking a comfortable dwelling at Bereydah, consisting of two large rooms on the ground floor and three smaller ones, besides a spacious courtyard surrounded by high walls, for all of which he paid 36 cents a month.

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THE gullibility of some travelers is well illustrated by an incident which has just occurred on the Northern Pacific Railway. A person entered the car and demanded the baggage checks of trunks checked through to Tacoma. They were given up, and it was discovered on arrival at Tacoma that every one of the trunks had been claimed and delivered at Portland.

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PREDICTIONS for a remarkably cold winter still continue to be made, the latest by an old Connecticut weather prophet, who maintains that the coming winter will be very severe. He bases his predictions on the preparations which, he says, have been made by wild animals about their winter homes. Squirrels and mice, he says, have made their nests unusually thick and strong, and the squirrels have buried their nuts at an unusual depth. Corn-husks are notably thick and tight, and the gum on horse chestnut buds is very abundant.

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"NOTHING teaches patience like a garden. All have to wait for the fruits of the earth. You may go round and watch the opening bud from day to day; but it takes its own time, and you cannot urge it on faster. If forced, it is only torn to pieces. All the best results of a garden, like those of life, are slowly but regularly progressive. Each year does a work that nothing but a year can do. "Learn to labor and to wait" is one of the best lessons of a garden. All that is good takes time, and comes only by growth.

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THE high price for bread, in the face of the fact that wheat is cheaper than it has been for many years, is encouraging the workingmen of London to form co-operative societies. One of these societies has just been established in Bermondsey, the home of the tanners, and with remarkable success. The action of bakers, therefore, though temporarily inconvenient to the people, is expected, in the end, to be fruitful of good results. In Paris and Vienna there is some talk of a Government regulation in prices.

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SAYS a correspondent: "If Norway is learning from America, there are some points on which America can learn from Norway. The treatment of the poor is one. There are almost no beggars in the kingdom, and the self respect of the poor is so cherished that they would scarcely go as readily into mendicancy as in countries where they are scorned and abused. The "steam kitchen" of Christiana is one of the practical ways of helping poverty. It is owned by a stock company, the members of which only desire to receive a moderate interest on their capital.

—

IT is not the best things—that is, the things that we call best—that **make** men. It is not pleasant things; it is not the calm experience of life. It is life's rugged experiences, its tempests, its trials. The discipline of life is here good and there evil, here trouble and there joy, here roughness and there smoothness, one working with the other; and the alterations of one and the other which necessitate adaptations constitute a part of that education which makes man a man in distinction from an animal, which has no education. The successful man invariably bears upon his brow the marks of the struggles he had to undergo before he succeeded.

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THE poor of some parts of Connecticut, according to a correspondent, are kept on the "lowest bidder" plan. For the past year the paupers have been put out of sight and hearing into an old deserted farm house near the State line, and left to shift for themselves. Huddled into this out-of-the-way place, some crazy and vicious, others perfectly helpless, with the hard floor for a bed and stray chips and sticks they themselves gather in the vicinity for fuel, and raw material only furnished for provisions, which they may cook or not—such is claimed to be the life of people thrown upon the town for a living. They are kept on the contract system—that is, bids are asked for their keeping, and the lowest bidder gets the job.

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BUT, after all, what is the brain but a scrap-book? If, when we are asleep, some one could peep in there, what would he find? Lines from favorite poets, stray bits of tunes and snatches from songs, melodies from operas, sentences from books, strange, meaningless dates, recollections of childhood vague and gradually growing fainter, moments of perfect happiness, hours of despair and misery. The first kiss of childhood lovers, the first parting of bosom friends, the word of praise or the word of blame of a fond mother, pictures of men and women, hopes and dreams that come to nothing, unrequited kindnesses, gratitude for favors, quarrels and reconciliations, old jokes, and through them all the thread of one deep and enduring passion for some one man or woman that may have been a misery or a delight.

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A WRITER in a New York paper concludes as follows a lengthy article discussing the question: "Are the rich growing richer and the poor growing poorer?" The great increase in the number of farms, of farm stock and of value in agricultural implements in the last forty years, as well as the increase of houses in our villages and cities, and the increase of the number of depositors and the amount of deposits in our savings banks, all declare that the poor are not growing poorer. But the great depreciation in stocks and bonds in which our mechanics and laborers do not invest, is positive proof that the rich in the past few years have not grown richer. Where the reduction in the wages of the laborer has been one cent, the depression in the securities of the rich, with the exception of Government bonds, has been one dollar. All investigations prove that the condition of the poor—I mean those who live by their own labor of hand and brain—is gradually improving, and all their surroundings are growing better.

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THE most important international work of our era is the effort which is being made by the European nations to open up Africa to the civilization and trade of the Old World. Great Britian is taking possession of the Upper and Lower Egypt, and is asserting her authority as against the Boers, the final result of which will be an extension of her power over portions of South Africa now in possession of the native tribes. The European movements in Western Africa have left only about 850 miles of the seaboard in native hands between the desert of Sahara and the Cape of Good Hope. During the past year England and Germany have taken possession of over a thousand miles of sea coast. South of the Sahara Desert, France claims jurisdiction over 600 miles of coast line, Great Britain over 1,300 miles, Germany over 750 miles, Portugal over 800 miles, while the Republic of Liberia has 358 miles of sea coast. An understanding has been arrived at between Great Britain and Germany, and both of these powers will act together in opening the Congo land to commerce. From every part is Europe pressing toward the interior of Africa.

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THE wealth of the Church of England in worldly, not spiritual, goods is just now receiving considerable attention, but speculation has not much upon which to base itself, for the reason that no one knows precisely what its income is, except the two archbishops, and they, probably wisely, keep the knowledge securely to themselves. Some of the most valuable property in England belongs to the Church, which has held it ever since it was taken away from the Roman Catholics by Henry VIII., and bestowed upon the newly-created bishops to make their fealty sure. The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Primate of all England, has an annual income of $75,000 in addition to Lambeth Palace, his London or city residence. The Archbishop of York, the Primate of England, receives $50,000 a year, besides two residences and a large household of officials. The tithes of some of the other bishops are: London, $50,000; Durham, $35,000; Winchester, $35,000; Ely, $27,300; and Bath, Lincoln, Oxford, Salisbury, Liverpool and Worcester, $25,000 each. The Bishop of Sodor and Man, who has neither cathedral nor dean, gets $10,000 a year for doing nothing.

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IN this country public roads are yet in their infancy. In Europe, Spain has the worst highways, and they were in a bad condition in all countries a century and a half ago. It was not always so. After the decline of Roman civilization but little attention was paid to highways anywhere for hundreds of years. Rome's roadways were the best that the world has ever seen. They extended from Wales to the banks of the Euphrates, and from the Rhine to the Atlas Mountains. Tiberius Nero once started from Lyons and drove northward two hundred miles in twenty-four hours. Such speed could only have been made on a fine road and with numerous relays of fast horses. Besides her great military roads, Rome built a network of crossroads leading to the villages. In England it is estimated that the Romans built 2,500 miles of paved roads. All of the old empires noted for their civilization had good roads. The Persians had highways along which the king's couriers rode at a speed of from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty miles a day. When a country retrogrades in civilization and commerce, its roads are always neglected. Railroads have greatly simplified the problem of maintaining highways, but the matter still demands the attention of states and statesmen.

BUT ONCE A YEAR.

BY T. MILLER.

Those Christmas bells so sweetly chime,
As on the day when first they rang
So merrily in the olden time,
And far and wide their music flung;
Shaking the tall gray-ivied tower,
With all their deep melodious power;
They still proclaim to every ear,
"Old Christmas comes but once a year."

He merrily came in days of old,
When roads were few, and ways were foul;
Now staggered—now some ditty trolled;
Now drank deep from his wassail-bowl—
Half buried 'neath the mistletoe
His long beard hung with flakes of snow;
And still he ever carolled clear,
"Old Christmas comes but once a year."

But those old times are dead and gone,
And those who hailed them passed away.
Yet still there lingers many a one,
To welcome in Old-Christmas day.
The poor will many a care forget
And sorrow flank not of his debt,
Then let us sing amid good cheer,
"Old Christmas comes but once a year."

Christmas Roses.

BY A. H. BALDWIN.

WE ALL wondered why it was Miss Rutherford had never married.

When I say we, I mean all of us who lived in and about Ballybridge, where the Rutherfords were much looked up to, owning, as they did, Rutherford Hall for generations. Of course, as Mrs. Miller, the Doctor's wife, said,—

"Excellent marriages are made on the wrong side of thirty."

"Thirty! Oh, my dear Mrs. Mills, you are putting Miss Rutherford's age at a low figure—nearer to the wrong side of forty I should say."

Now Mrs. Dewar, although she is married to our good rector, has a very sharp tongue; she is one of those women who delight in running a pin, so to speak, into any hole she could find in her neighbor's harness.

But there was no doubt that Mabel Rutherford looked more than Mrs. Mills said; she had no idea of setting herself out, as the saying is—and, as I have often noticed, if you put yourself on the shelf, there is nobody will stretch out a hand to take you down, the world has grown such a busy one, now-a-days, that there is no time for such kind offices.

Moreover, with the young family at the Hall growing up, and another Mabel Rutherford fresh and fair as springtime coming on the scene, it was full time, as she herself said, for "Aunty" to stand aside.

I never saw a woman resign her rights so cheerfully; it never seemed to give her even a momentary pang.

I remember I was quite angry with her, when she told me, laughing, how she had heard one of the nurses at the Hall talk of her as "Old Mrs. Rutherford."

"My dear," I said, "it all comes from your own fault, dressing yourself in those hateful caps and talking as if you were Methusaleh. Believe me, people take you at your own valuation; it's doing yourself an injustice, my love, for you are not old."

"But I feel so, Mrs. Merydyth; everything seems so long ago, and there's Harry going into the army, and Mabel to be presented this year, and, worse than all, Lina Verschoyle's son is married, and has a baby boy.

"I had him (Lina's son) in my arms; that makes me a sort of grandmother, doesn't it, vicariously?" and she made a little comic face of distress.

"Well!" I said, impatiently, "and what does that prove? I daresay, you were almost a baby yourself: and as for Lina Verschoyle, she's going to be married herself—a second time, and she a grandmother, not vicariously, but actually.

"The fact of it is," I went on, thinking to myself I would improve the occasion by quoting Mrs. Mills, "the best marriages are made very often after first youth is past.

"Men are not such fools as they seem to be, and they have sense enough to choose a wife for something else than girlish graces."

"Like Mabel's," she said, looking at me, with a smile. "Ah! dear Mrs. Merydyth, I thought you knew the world better. It is very good of you to try and console me, but I flatter myself I know my place. Madame Swetchine says that an unmarried woman in a family is something between a priest and an arm chair. I quite accept the situation and am thoroughly content."

She had been settling my flower vases; it was a kindly office she did for me once a week, and I always liked to watch her at her work; the way her long slender fingers handled the delicate blooms, and parted them tenderly, like some loved and cherished friend.

As she finished speaking, she held towards me a lovely bunch of tall graceful gladiolis.

"These are like us women," she said: "lovely when freshly gathered, but only fit to throw aside when evening comes and they have faded."

"I don't like your simile," I answered, "it is hard and untrue. Men's love is worth more than that; in my opinion, they are more faithful than we are, and I could prove it to you by a dozen instances. Look at Mrs. Mills, the Doctor waited twenty years for her, and I don't think she could ever have been much as to looks."

She laughed, and I went on.

"As for you, I am quite certain that if anything has gone wrong, it has been your own fault. From all I have heard, you could have been married over and over again——"

And here I stopped suddenly, for a wave of color had come into her generally pale face, and she held up her head with a proud air of disdain.

"I didn't think that you would listen to the gossip of this little place," she said, coldly.

It was my turn to redden now, and I felt my face grow crimson.

"It wasn't gossip, it was only common justice," I answered, without thinking. "Some people say such absurd things, and it is very provoking, when I am sure you had no end of proposals."

"Only that, like the Old Maids of Lee, one was too tall, and one too short. I am sure my kind friend, Mrs. Dewar, said something of that sort. I wonder that she and every one else is not tired of so old a story. Would you mind telling her next time, Mrs. Merydyth, that I never had a proposal—seriously never—terrible isn't it—not even from the Curate?"

* * * * *

It was a few weeks after this that the Rutherfords went up to town to present Mabel.

They had taken a large house, and were going to make a great splash, for Lady Emily, the Colonel's wife, has grand connections, and the Rutherfords themselves were more thought of than most quiet country people are.

The Colonel was a very popular man, but I don't think any one cared much for her ladyship, she held her head so very high.

She had been a great beauty, and was silly enough to fancy she was so still.

The Colonel's wife liked people to say she looked like her daughter's sister, and pinched in her waist, and painted her face, and made herself, to my mind, utterly ridiculous.

I don't know how things would have gone on at the Hall only for Miss Rutherford, who was a regular breakwater between the Colonel and his wife, and was never done throwing oil, in her gentle way, on the very troubled waters of domestic life there; but her sister-in-law gave her very little thanks for her good offices.

She always spoke of her in a slighting manner as "a good creature," and "a great oddity"—the fact being that she was jealous of Mabel's influence with her husband and children; the young people adored "Aunty!" and well they might.

She had done twice as much for them as their vain selfish mother had ever done—was too careful of her looks to injure her complexion by sitting up at night with any one, but "Aunty" had nursed nieces and nephews through many a childish illness.

Well, it is wonderful the way the goods of life are distributed, why a heartless, painted peg for fine clothes like Lady Emily Rutherford should have been given all the joys of domestic life and Mabel be left nothing but the cold shadow of an empty heart, seemed to me one of those inscrutable dispensations of Providence which I know are not to be questioned in far seeing wisdom.

All the same, I felt as much indignation as a Christian woman is capable of feeling when, late in the day of the Rutherfords' going away Mrs. Mills ran in to see me.

"You have heard, I suppose," she said, "how Miss Rutherford's left behind after all?"

I was pouring her out a cup of tea, but I declare I nearly let it spill all over the place. "Left behind—what do you mean, Mrs. Mills?"

"Little Vere Rutherford has been ailing these couple of days; he is a delicate child—thank you—two lumps—and the doctor didn't like the symptoms last night, and this morning he saw signs of a rash. So as Mrs. Rutherford had been up and down all night with the child, it was safer you know, It wouldn't be pleasant to have scarlatina up in London."

"Scarlatina!" I almost screamed: "surely the doctor doesn't think it's that."

(I have my own reasons, and very sad ones they are, for dreading this of all other epidemics—but this has nothing to do with my story).

Mrs. Mills couldn't say, the doctor would know better to-morrow; "but we both agreed it was just like Lady Emily's selfishness to throw the burden of her sick child upon her sister-in-law.

"The doctor says her ladyship was tearing about like a mad thing, sniffing camphor and deluging every one with that vile carbolic; she threw a lot of it over the doctor and spoiled his new brown surtout," Mrs. Mills added.

I declare I could hardly sleep a wink that night for thinking of my poor friend.

I drove over to the Hall the first thing in the morning, taking the precaution to send the pony-carriage home from the lodge gates; for I have a young groom, and it always seems to me very thoughtless and selfish to expose a servant's life to any danger of infection.

Just as I came to the front door I saw Miss Rutherford crossing the hall, she had a cup of something for the child in her hand, and her face had the weary look of a person who had been up all night, but she brightened when she saw me.

"Oh, this is good of you," she said; "but you mustn't come in, dear Mrs. Merydyth. Little Vere has taken scarlatina, and, so we must be in quarantine, he and I."

I made her no answer beyond shutting the door behind me. "I know a good deal, unfortunately, about scarlatina," I said, "but I never hear of anyone of my age taking it, so if such be the case I shall astonish the faculty by a new development."

And without another word I marched up to the child's nursery, where I established myself quietly for the day, sending Mabel to her room to lie down.

And, although she made much protest, this remained our arrangement during the illness, and between us our patient was soon on the road to recovery.

He was a nice, fair-haired little fellow, and he never knew how he wrung my heart, lying there with his flushed face and fever-stricken limbs, reminding me so strongly—but, there, I am going to digress again.

Well, we had him all right soon, and we were beginning to talk of taking him to the sea for change, when what should happen to upset all our plans but Mabel herself falling ill; and the worst of it was she took the fever very badly, much worse than little Vere.

I never shall forget the piteous look on her poor face as she said to me:

"I was born to be a trouble to you, dear;" as if I didn't count it the greatest privilege to be of some use to one I loved so well, and if I was fond of Mabel before, she grew into my very heart during her illness, she was so gentle, so grateful for the least kindness, so thoughtful of all about her.

There was one comfort, her sickness caused quite a sensation.

Everyone seemed to wish to do something to show their appreciation of her—even Mrs. Dewar; and the Duchess of Salt Towers, who was indifferent to the whole country, sent a man and horse fifteen miles to inquire for Miss Rutherford, but the day her messenger came duchesses seemed very small fry in comparison with the life trembling in the balance.

I remember that very morning Colonel Rutherford had come down from town, bringing the great physician, Sir James Denver, with him.

We could see Sir James thought very badly, and I never saw anything to equal the Colonel's distress; he was a cold man generally, but he broke down now altogether.

"My darling Mabel," he said, "your life has been long sacrificed to me and mine," and he laid his head on the table and sobbed like a child.

That night my poor dear called to me in her weak voice.

"Mrs. Merydyth," she said, "I know I can trust you. When I am dead will you open my desk; you will find a few letters tied together and some withered roses. Will you promise me they will lie in my coffin?"

Of course I promised her with as much voice as I could command; but, thank God, there was no question of anything of the kind.

The next morning Sir James, who had slept at the Hall, thought she was a shade better; and, although he had done nothing but look at her, somehow we all felt the shade was due to him.

He went away, squeezing all our hands, and leaving a general sense of hopefulness behind him, but no directions.

He had every confidence in Doctor Mills, he said, and the doctor certainly justified his assurance.

For Miss Rutherford recovered—very slowly, but surely. I think she was the only one who didn't rejoice most heartily at this piece of good fortune, but she seemed to me almost sorry to take up the burden of life again.

This, by the way, is a feeling very common after severe illness, when there are not many ties to bind one to earth, and I could see Mabel suffered a good deal from it.

But, by-and-by, when we got down by the sea, and she sat watching the great waves rolling in, and felt the immensity of the ocean, stretching before her, she grew more content.

"I have been a wicked, ungrateful woman of late," she said to me one day, "but I am turning over a new leaf. Have a little patience with me, kindest, best of friends, for a little longer."

I didn't want to use my patience, except perhaps in the matter of those withered roses.

I confess I should have liked to have heard all about them.

Miss Rutherford, however, seemed to have forgotten all that, and I did not care to remind her.

She was not of the sort who can be entrapped into confidence, and I would not have forced a confession from her.

So there was no help, therefore, for it, but to bottle up my curiosity and let it stand aside.

We were all late in settling down for the winter, for after our time by the sea, Mabel and I separated.

She went to join the Rutherfords abroad, and I paid some visits in the south, so it was coming up to Christmas before I got home again.

It is always I think the best part of going away in the coming home, it repays one for the bother and confusion of "flitting"; and what an appreciation one has of home comforts, such as windows that shut, and doors that don't creak, after a month or six weeks in lodgings.

Better than all is the delicious feeling of independence.

"No more standing on your hind legs," I said to myself when I awoke in my own bed, in my own room, and I knew I could stay there if I liked without alarming any kind soul of a hostess, and sending her breathless to see if anything was wrong with "poor old Mrs. Merydyth."

The longer I live the more confirmed am I in the opinion that visiting on its present principles is a mistake; but I sh'n't have time to finish my story if I launch into this, one of my favorite themes.

The two Mabel Rutherfords were my first visitors.

I thought of the two the aunt looked the best, certainly the handsomest. Miss Rutherford had not suffered by her illness, rest and care had made her little stouter, and her hair, which had been cut short, gave her a more youthful appearance.

Her niece, on the contrary, had lost much of her pretty freshness, and had a weary, listless air which struck me at once.

"Mabel is tired," Miss Rutherford said, looking at the girl loudly. "She hasn't half recovered her London dissipation, and now she is going to begin again. There is to be a big party at the Hall for Christmas, and although it is all in her honor, this ungrateful child says she doesn't care about it."

"Mamma is asking such a lot of stupid people," put in Mabel. "Would you believe it, 'Aunty,' after all I said, she did write to that horrid old Sir Frederick, and he is absolutely coming."

She got up as she said this with an air of great disgust, and walked out on the terrace, for the morning was mild and the glass door was open.

"What is it?" I asked; "and who is Sir Frederick?"

"A gentleman who admires the child, I fancy from what Emily says; she met him in the Highlands, and I believed he begged to be asked to the Hall. So Emily says. He is a very distinguished man, and is going out as governor of one of the colonies."

"But she is very young, and if he is an old man——"

"Ah, that's her way of talking—he is not more than forty, and doesn't look it, Emily says. Somehow, I fancy the child has seen some one else, but she says nothing."

"Ah, reserve is an inheritance, sometimes."

I made this remark significantly, and Miss Rutherford colored.

But just then Mabel came back, and we said no more.

There were great preparations at the Hall for the coming guests, amongst whom were several of her ladyship's grand relations, Scotch principally, and as there would be one or two county balls, there was quite a flutter of excitement in and about Ballybridge.

Miss Dunbar, the principal needlewoman, was so busy going from house to house, that she couldn't put a stitch in my new piece of satin or merveilleuse, as I think they call it.

But perhaps it was as well, and I had to send it up to town to be made, for, to my surprise, I got a card for the first grand dinner at the Hall.

I am sure it was the Colonel's doing, as an acknowledgement of my friendship for his sister, but I felt at once that I was glad my satin was coming down, for although a made up thing may do for a ball, at a dinner party one must be all right.

I saw very little of the Hall people during the week; they were all busy, what with the church and the poor, and the coming festivities, every one had their hands full.

But young Mabel dropped the garlands she was making, and ran in to say a word to me.

She had taken very much to coming in of late, and was very pretty and graceful in her ways with an old woman, and it made me quite sorry to see so young a creature so down-hearted and sad as she seemed to me to be.

"You must be looking your best," I said to her, "for all those fine people; I think you ought to take a rest, for you seem very tired."

"I don't think it much matters how I look," she answered; "at least, I certainly don't care."

"And Sir Frederick Poynts coming all the way to see you, and to make you a governor's lady?"

To my great surprise the child began to cry.

"It is very unkind of you, Mrs. Merydyth," she said, "and I daresay you tell other people about this stupid, silly, odious old man, and—and make them unhappy, too."

"What other people?" I asked.

I declare I thought the child was feverish, or sick, or something.

Indeed, I didn't know what to think, for the next moment she was down on her knees by my chair.

"Did you never suspect, Mrs. Merydyth, that Harry and I cared for one another?"

"Harry—my nephew—Harry Merydyth, do you mean?"

And I gave such a jump from my chair that Mabel, who was kneeling against it, fell backwards upon the carpet, which was a good thing, for it set her laughing and dispersed her tears.

And by-and-by she sat down beside me and told me all about it—how they had met everywhere, and danced, and rode, and talked together, and gone on the top of coaches to Harlingham, and up the river in a boat to Richmond; and how he was the handsomest, the best and kindest Harry that ever lived.

Well, after this I don't think I need have said reserve has an inheritance; however, it was all very pretty, and there were charming blushes, and tender little embraces, and youth and love go so fitly together, that I hadn't the heart to say anything, only I didn't see what was to come of it.

No one knew better than I did how little money Harry had, and what I could give him would be comparatively small so long as I lived.

I hinted something of this sort, but she answered me as if all these points had been under consideration.

"We can wait till Harry gets an ap-

pointment," she said, "and till then he won't speak to papa."

"Why, you don't mean to say it's a secret engagement?"

For answer she drew from the inside of her dress a ribbon with a gold ring hanging to it.

"He gave me this, but I never wear it, and no one knows a word that there is anything between us, not even 'Aunty,' for you know mamma would be sure to say it was her fault; the only one I have trusted is you, dear Mrs. Merydyth, and surely you won't betray us."

She hung about me with such tears and kisses and entreaties, that I was fain to promise; only I was very uncomfortable, for I saw at a glance that an awkward situation it was for me, to be a party to inveigling Colonel Rutherford's daughter into an engagement with a penniless young officer like Harry.

I made up my mind I would have it out with him, and not spare him as I did this poor foolish child, whose eyes were quite red with all her crying.

I kept her with me till she got quieted from her agitation, and was fit to be seen again; and when she went away there was not much time to get ready for the great dinner: in truth, my enjoyment in going was quite spoiled, for I felt as if I were playing a dishonorable part towards the Rutherfords; moreover the burthen of a secret is to me objectionable, and this one weighed so much upon me that I hardly gave a thought to my new satin, although I knew there was a great deal of curiosity to see it, as Mrs. Dewar had someway found out it was coming from town, and had set people talking about it.

The clock was striking the quarter to eight as I got in, and the room was nearly full, which you may be sure did not set me at my ease, so many strangers being there.

Lady Emily was talking to a tall, distinguished looking man, whom I at once decided was Sir Frederick Poyntz; and when I shook hands with her she hardly looked at me—she was so engrossed with him.

I did not see Miss Rutherford anywhere, but presently Mabel came and whispered to me, that "Aunty" was lying down.

"She is not coming to dinner," she said, "and mamma is so cross about it, as if Aunty could help it; it came on so suddenly, just as Sir Frederick arrived. I thought she was going to faint."

I don't know why it was, but at that moment something flashed into my mind, and I looked at Sir Frederick with more interest.

I was quite in a fever to get upstairs after dinner, and when we ladies were in the drawing-room I made my escape and went to Miss Rutherford's room.

She was lying with her face to the wall, and held her handkerchief to her eyes, on account of the light, she said, but I could see she had been crying.

She avoided, however, all mention of the cause of her headache, and I must say I felt hurt and angry at her reticence—she might have trusted me, I thought, considering that I already know of her withered roses.

But I was never one to force confidence, so I left her to darkness and her own thoughts, and went back to the drawing-room; here I was more fortunate, for Sir Frederick came and sat beside me.

I saw Lady Emily's sharp blue eyes looking in our direction, and she soon got up under pretence of shading the lamp, but not before Sir Frederick had said:

"How is Miss Rutherford's headache?" His voice had a pleasant cordial tone in it which pleased me, for I think the voice a great guide to the inner man or woman. "It is a disappointment to me not to see her," he went on, "for I knew her years ago, and was looking forward to our meeting; although I daresay she has almost forgotten me."

"I don't think that likely," I answered.

"Why?" he asked, quickly; "has she spoken to you of me? You know I wasn't Sir Frederick Poyntz in those days, my name was Frederick Lee. I have inherited from my uncle."

"Miss Rutherford never speaks of her girl days," I answered; and I couldn't judge by his face whether he was disappointed or relieved, for at that moment Lady Emily interrupted.

"What are you two talking about?" she asked in her thin staccato voice.

"I was inquiring for Miss Rutherford," he said, quietly; "and telling Mrs. Merydyth she was an old friend of mine."

"Oh, you'll find dear Mabel greatly changed, she has lost all her looks; but then, of course, it's a long time, twenty years ago—quite a lifetime. But dear me, Sir Frederick, what a boy you must have been."

"By no means," he answered gravely. "I was older than Miss Rutherford by some years. She was very handsome then."

"And so she is now," I put in quickly. "To me, Miss Rutherford has one of those faces which will always be beautiful, it is so full of sweetness and goodness."

Her ladyship give a little spiteful laugh.

"Sir Frederick, you must know that my sister-in-law and Mrs. Merydyth are devoted to each other, they are like the two Welsh women who went to live somewhere together and make themselves so remarkable with queer ways.

"We are devoted to one another as two people of such different ages can be," I remarked, quietly. "Miss Rutherford could easily be my daughter."

"Oh, dear Mrs. Merydyth, now really—— Well, I won't say anything—ladies' ages, Sir Frederick, are ticklish things. I care very little myself, everyone knows that I was a mere child when I was married, and darling Mab is not eighteen.

"Some people say—but that is, of course, ridiculous—that we look like sisters: but then, I was never a sensible woman like my sister-in-law. I think sense ages one. Mabel is like a centrepiece or family plateau, as we all call her," and she laughed again, showing her white teeth, and making me feel terribly angry.

"If by a plateau you mean a bright spotless character," I began, but she interrupted.

"Oh, please, don't dissect my words, Mrs. Merydyth. Sir Frederick understands me, I'm sure."

"I do, perfectly," he said.

And some way I was quite satisfied that he understood me also; so I said no more, only I felt quite certain that he and Miss Rutherford's roses were bound up in one another, and would have made a pretty little romance.

"At all events," I thought, "now that they are thrown together in the same house, any cross-purposes that were long ago must come right now." I declare to you I was in a fever of anxiety and anticipation, fancying the explanation and reconciliation.

The next time I went up to the hall, however, my enthusiasm got a cold bath.

Miss Rutherford was looking paler, older, and stiffer than I had ever seen her.

She wore, too, a most unbecoming cap, and she and Sir Frederick seemed as unconscious of *any* love passages, past or present, as two people could possibly be—that little merry Mabel engrossed all his attention, and, if I hadn't known that she was so devoted to my nephew Harry, I should have certainly said she was flirting with the Baronet.

"That seems to be going on very well," I remarked, as Sir Frederick and Mabel set off after luncheon for a long ride.

"They are excellent friends," Miss Rutherford remarked, calmly.

"Friends! I think you might call them by a warmer name; and, I must say, Sir Frederick is a lover to be proud of. He seems so kind and gentle, I am sure he will make an excellent husband."

She was quite silent, and I went on.

"It appears he was an old friend of yours: I rather suspect he was something more—a dejected admirer."

"You must suspect nothing, nor ask nothing," she said, quickly; "for you see how it is. Sir Frederick is my niece's lover, my brother and Lady Emily are quite pleased, and, as you say, he will make her an admirable husband. The child will, I think, be happy."

She tried very hard to smile in saying this, but if ever you saw misery written on every line of a poor white face, it was on hers.

"I don't believe there is anything of the kind," I cried, angry with myself for my unnecessary cruelty.

I would have given something handsome to have eased her mind by telling her of Mabel and Harry's little business, but there's the annoyance of holding other people's secrets.

At any rate, I determined I'd give the little coquette a piece of my mind; but I gave up that notion too, when I went home, for who should I find sitting by the fire but Harry himself.

He had come down to spend Christmas with me, he said.

I soon gave him to know I knew what had brought him; and when I had scolded him well, and proved to him he had behaved in the worst possible manner, both to me and the Rutherfords, I suddenly turned round, and told him I would never let a little money stand in the way of his happiness, and that my lawyer was making an arrangement which would, I thought put him in a position to speak to Mabel" father.

And so we settled that he should do it the next day, which was Christmas Day.

I went to bed happier than I thought to have done; it was so pleasant to see the boy's happiness.

After all, I thought, perhaps the other two will make a joyful Christmas of it also.

That Christmas Day was unexceptionally beautiful, a still, almost warm day, although the fields were white with snow, and the large crystallized drops, hung on the branches of the trees.

I always like to spend the festival alone.

To a lonely woman like me, it is full of memories sad and tender, and the sight of joyous greetings and loving interchange of affection touches the old sore in my heart, which, to say the truth is never quite closed.

Well, there is many a one to whom, like me, Christmas is more a pain than a pleasure.

Harry's love affair had struck a chord on this particular Christmas and rather upset me, and after he had gone off to the Hall I had a good cry, which did me good.

And then I took out some old letters and was reading them when the door opened, and who should come in but Sir Frederick Poyntz.

I was a little taken back, for my eyes were red, and it struck me that he would think me a very silly old woman to be crying at my age over some yellow faded letters.

But he must have guessed my thoughts for sitting down he began to talk of the sadness of Christmas times.

"No one cares for it," he said, "but children and servants, for to them it brings appreciable goods; to others, only memories we fain would banish."

He sighed heavily as he spoke, and looking round my room his eyes fell upon a lovely bundle of Christmas roses which had been sent to me that morning from Cannes.

They are my favorite flowers, and the sight of them brings back to me many happy days. Curiously enough they had an association for my visitor.

"Do you know, Mrs. Merydyth," he said, "that looking at that bunch of roses, and at your kind face, tempts me to tell you a chapter in my life, and to ask you for sympathy and advice.

"Once upon a time I was desperately in love. I was a poor young ensign, with no money to speak of, and not much chance of getting richer; no match for a young beauty about whom elder sons were gathering; and so her chaperone made me feel, and politely gave me to understand I should stand aside to make way for my betters.

"I would have done so, for I was proud, only that Miss Rutherford (you will have guessed it was her) seemed to wish me to keep my place. So it went on, through different stages, during which I sank deeper and deeper, feeling as I did my love was returned.

"All at once I was aroused by the news that my regiment was ordered to India, with no chance of homecoming for fifteen years. It was Christmas time, I remember, and Miss Rutherford was spending it with the lady who did office as her chaperone during the season.

"She wanted her, I think, for her son, a young lordling owner of the fine place where they were staying near Exeter. I got a friend of mine to invite me to the neighborhood, and on Christmas day I drove over to see her.

"I took with me a bouquet of Christmas roses, and a letter in which I said that I loved her, and that if she would give me any hope, I would work heaven and earth to come back in two years; that I had interest and could exchange, and that there was some chance my uncle would make me an allowance.

"I put this into the leaves of the bouquet and I placed it myself in her hand, so there was no mistake; but to it I never received any answer."

"But there is some mistake," I said, in great agitation; "a very great mistake. I can prove it to you." And then I told him of the withered roses she had told me to place in her coffin, and the faded letter. "These must be yours," I said, "and for some reason you never got her answer. Oh, dear, how stupid men are. Why didn't you write again?"

He looked at me in amazement.

"I never thought of such a thing."

"Of course you didn't, it's always the way; and she has been waiting all these years; and when you do come——"

"She treats me like a stranger," he said, walking up and down the room. "But is it any wonder, she thought I behaved like a blackguard. My poor darling. Kept my roses all these years."

He was evidently very much "fetched," as the saying is, by this trait, and put so many questions to me that I told it all over again to him; and as I entered more into particulars he was greatly touched, and I heard him murmur "Angel" under his breath.

Just at this moment there was a tap at the glass door which opens on the terrace.

I knew it was Miss Rutherford coming to pay me her Christmas visit, so I whispered to Sir Frederick to raise the sash and let her in, and when his back was turned I slipped away—and I don't flatter myself that I was missed, for they had a great deal of mutual explanations to make, and although they talked till dinner-time it didn't seem to me that they had arrived at any conclusion as to how the mistake had happened, but it didn't matter, as they set it right in a most satisfactory manner.

Of course then the news came to be generally known.

There were all kinds of stories, and people said it was my doing, and that I had also made Harry and Mabel's marriage.

I din't care for the absurd gossip, I was so pleased to see four such happy faces round me.

As for Miss Rutherford, no one would have known her, especially when after a little she took off her odious cap and let us see her soft wavy brown hair.

Well, certainly, love and happiness are greater beautifiers than all the cosmetics invented.

We had a very gay wedding for Mabel and Harry, with bridesmaids and speeches, and throwing of rice, and everything as it should be.

And two or three days after Miss Rutherford and Sir Frederick went up to London and were quietly married in one of the city churches, with only the Colonel and myself as spectators, and I thought I never saw a wedding more to my mind, and I don't believe there ever was a happier couple.

Tom's Christmas.

BY E. P. SPENCER.

IT was very provoking that seamstresses and such people would get married like the rest of the world," Mrs Greenough said, half in fun and half in earnest.

Her sewing was just coming on, and here was Lizzie Brown, who had suited her so nicely, going off to be married, and she had no resource but to advertise, and take whomsoever she could get.

No less than ten women had been there that day, and no one would answer.

"There comes Number Eleven; you will see," she cried, as the bell rang.

Kitty Greenough looked on with interest.

Indeed, it was her gowns, rather than her mother's, that were most pressing.

She was just sixteen, and since last winter she had shot up suddenly, as girls at that age so often do, and left all her clothes behind her.

Mrs. Greenough was right—it was another seamstress; and Bridget showed in a plain, sad-looking woman of about forty, with an air of intense respectability.

Mrs. Greenough explained what she wanted done, and the woman said quietly that she was accustomed to such work—would Mrs. Greenough be so kind as to look at some recommendations?

Whereupon she handed out several lady-like-looking notes, whose writers endorsed the bearer, Mrs. Margaret Graham, as faithful and capable, used to trimmings of all sorts, and quick to catch an idea.

"Very well, indeed," Mrs. Greenough said, as she finished reading them; "I could ask nothing better. Can you come at once?"

"To-morrow if you wish, madam," was the answer, and then Mrs Graham went away.

Kitty Greenough was an impulsive, imaginative girl.

No subject was too dull or unpromising for her fancy to touch it.

She made a story for herself about every new person who came in her way.

After Number Eleven had gone down the stairs, Kitty laughed.

"Isn't she a sober-sides, mamma? I don't believe there'll be any frisk in my dresses at all if she trims them."

"There'll be frisk enough in them if you wear them," her mother answered, smiling at the bright, saucy, winsome face of her one tall daughter.

Kitty was ready to turn the conversation.

"What do you think she is, mamma; wife or widow?"

And then answering her own question—

"I think she's married, and he's sick, and she has to take care of him. That solemn, still way she has comes of much staying in a sick room. She's in the habit of keeping quiet, don't you see? I wish she was a little prettier; I think I would get well quicker."

"There'd be no plain, quiet people in your world if you made one," her mother said, smiling; "but you'd make a mistake to leave them out. You would get tired even of the sun if it shone all the time."

The next day the new seamstress came, and a thoroughly good one she proved—"better even than Lizzie," Mrs. Greenough said, and this was high praise.

She sewed steadily, and never opened her lips except to ask some question about her work.

Even Kitty, who used to boast that she could make a dumb man talk, had not audacity enough to intrude on the reserve in which Mrs. Graham entrenched herself.

"He's worse this morning," whispered saucy Kitty to her mother; "and she can do nothing but think about him and mind her gathers."

But, by the same token, "he" must have been worse every day, for during the two weeks she sewed there, Mrs. Graham never spoke of anything beyond her work.

When Mrs. Greenough had paid her, she said—

"Please give me your address, Mrs. Graham, for I may want to find you again."

"Seventeen, Hudson Street, ma'am; up two flights of stairs; and if I'm not there, Tom always is."

"There, didn't I tell you?" Kitty cried, exultingly, after the woman had gone. "Didn't I tell you that he was sick? You see, now, Tom's always there."

"Yes; but Tom may not be her husband, and I don't think he is. He is much more likely to be her child."

"I'm astonished at you. You say that to be contradictious. Now, it is not nice to be contradictious; besides, she wouldn't look so quiet and sad if Tom were only her boy," remarked Kitty.

But weeks passed on, and nothing more was heard of Mrs. Graham, until at last Kitty was to have a new dress, and Mrs. Greenough, who had undertaken to finish it, found that she had not time.

"Oh, let me go for Mrs. Graham, mamma," cried Kitty, eagerly. "Luke can drive me down to Hudson Street, and I shall see Tom."

Mrs. Greenough laughed and then consented.

In a few minutes Luke had brought to the door the one-horse chaise, in which Miss Kitty was always glad to make an excuse for going out.

Arrived at Hudson Street, she tripped up two flights of stairs, and tapped on a door, on which was a printed card with the name of Mrs Graham.

A voice, with a wonderful musical sweetness in it, answered—

"Please to come in; I cannot open the door."

If that were "he," he had a very singular voice for a man.

"Mamma was right after all," thought wilful Kitty. "It's rather curious how often mamma is right, when I come to think of it."

She opened the door, and saw, not Mrs. Graham's husband, nor yet her son, but a girl, whose face looked as if she might be about Kitty's own age, whose shoulders and waist told the same story, but whose lower limbs seemed curiously misshapen and shrunken—no larger, in fact, than those of a mere child.

The face was a pretty, winning face, not at all sad.

Short, thick brown hair curled round it, and big, brown eyes, full of good-humor, met Kitty's curious glance.

"I am 'Tom,'" the same musical voice—which made Kitty think of a bird's warble—said, in a tone of explanation. "I can't get up to open the door because, don't you see, I can't walk."

"And why—what—Tom——"

Kitty struggled desperately with the question she had begun to ask, and Tom kindly helped her out.

"Why am I Tom, do you mean, when it's a boy's name; or way can't I walk? I'm Tom because my father called me Tommsina, after his mother, and we can't afford such long names in this house; and I can't walk because I pulled a kettle of boiling water over on myself when I was six years old, and the only wonder is that I'm alive at all, I was left, you see, in a room by myself while mother was busy somewhere else, and when she heard me scream, and came to me, she pulled me out from under the kettle, and saved the upper half of me all right."

"Oh, how dreadful!" Kitty cried with the quick tears rushing to her eyes. "It must have almost killed your mother."

"Yes; that's what makes her so still and sober. She never laughs, but she never frets either, and, oh! how good she is to me."

Kitty glanced around the room, which seemed to her so bare.

It was spotlessly clean, and Tom's chair was soft and comfortable, as indeed a chair ought to be which must be sat in from morning till night.

Opposite to it were a few pictures on the wall.

Within easy reach was a little stand, on which stood a rose bush in a pot, and a basket full of bright-colored worsteds, while a book or two lay beside them.

"And do you never go out?" cried Kitty, forgetting her errand in her sympathy, forgetting, too, that Luke and his impatient horse were waiting below.

"Not lately. Mother used to take me down into the street sometimes; but I've grown too heavy for her now, and she can't. But I'm not very dull, even when she's gone. You wouldn't guess how many things I see from my window; and then I make worsted mats and tidies, and mother sells them and then I sing."

Kitty stepped to the window to see what range of vision it offered, and her eye fell on Luke.

She recalled her business.

"I came to see if I could get your mother to sew two or three days for me this week."

Tom was alert and business-like at once.

"Let me see," she said, "to-day is Tuesday," and she drew towards her a little book, and looked it over. "To-morrow is engaged, but you could have Thursday, Friday, and Saturday, if you want so much. Please write you name against them."

Kitty pulled off her pretty grey glove, and wrote her name and address with the little toy pencil at the end of her chatelaine, and then she turned to go, but it was Tom's turn to question.

"Please," said the sweet, fresh voice, which seemed so like the clear carol of a bird, "would you mind telling me how old you are? I'm sixteen, myself."

"And so am I sixteen," said Kitty.

"And you have a father and mother both, have you?"

"Yes, indeed," said Kitty.

"Oh, I've only mother, but she is as good to me. Must you go now? And I wonder if I shall ever see you again?"

"Yes, you will see me again," answered Kitty, eagerly, and then, moved by a sudden impulse of her kind, frank young heart, she bent over and touched her lips to the bright, bonny face of the poor girl who must sit prisoner there for ever, and yet who kept this bright cheerfulness all the time.

"Oh, mamma, I've had such a lesson," cried Kitty, bursting into her mother's room like a fresh wind; "and Tom has taught it to me. And he isn't he at all; she's a girl just my age, and she can't walk not a step since she was six years old."

And then Kitty told all the sad, tender little story, and fell to crying over it herself, and made her mother cry, too, before she was through.

After dinner she sat half the evening in a brown study.

Finally she came out of it, and began talking in her usual impulsive manner.

"Can't we have them here on Christmas Day, mamma? There's not a single pretty thing in that house except Tom herself and the rosebush; and everything did look so bare and poverty-stricken; and I know they'll never afford a good dinner in the world. Oh, say yes, mamma, dear. I know you'll say yes, because you're such a dear, and you love to make every one happy."

"Yes; but, first of all, I must love to make papa happy, must I not? You know he never wants any company but grandpa, and grandma, and Uncle John. I'm sure you would not like to spoil papa's old-fashioned Christmas Day."

Kitty's countenance fell.

She saw the justice of her mother's remark, and there was no more to be said.

She sat thinking over her disappointment in a silence which her mother was the one to break.

"But I've thought of a better thing," said this wise mamma, who was herself every bit as tender of heart as Kitty, and cared just as much about making people happy. "No doubt Mrs. Graham and Tom would just as much prefer being alone with his family; and how will it suit you if I have a dinner prepared for them? Mrs. Graham is hardly the woman one could take such a liberty with; but I'll beg her to let you have the pleasure of sending dinner to Tom on Christmas Day."

"Oh, mamma——"

"And Mrs. Graham's cook shall [illegible], and her self-sacrifice in [illegible] the case which Kitty was overcome by with gratitude which could only find vent in a rapturous [illegible].

Before bedtime Kitty had it all planned out.

She was to go in the chaise, and take Bridget and the basket.

Bridget was to mount guard by the horse's head while Luke went upstairs with Kitty and brought down Tom for a drive, and while they were gone, Bridget would take the basket in and see that everything was right, and then go home.

Mrs. Greenough consented to it all.

I think she enjoyed the prospect of Tom's ride herself, just as much as Kitty did.

While Mrs. Graham was sewing there, she made the arrangement with her, approaching the subject so delicately that the most sensitive of women could not be hurt, and putting the acceptance of both drive and dinner in the light of a favor to Kitty, who had taken a fancy to Tom.

The last afternoon of Mrs. Graham's stay Kitty called her mother into her room.

Mrs. Greenough saw spread out upon the bed a thick, warm, soft jacket, a woollen dress, a last year's hat.

"You know them by sight, don't you, mother? They are the last winter's clothes that I grew away from, and have taken leave of. May Tom have them?"

"Yes, indeed, if you'll undertake to give them to Tom's mother."

Kitty had seldom undertaken a more embarrassing task.

She stole into the sewing-room with the things in her arms.

"You'll be sure, won't you, Mrs. Graham, not to let Tom know she's going to ride until I get there, because I want to see how surprised she'll look."

"Yes, I'll be sure, never fear."

"And, Mrs. Graham, here are my jacket, hat, and dress that I wore last year, and I've grown out of them. Would you mind letting Tom wear them?"

"Would I mind?"

A swift, hot rush of tears filled Mrs. Graham's eyes, which presently she wiped away, and somehow then the eyes looked gladder than Kitty had ever seen them before.

"Do you think I am so weakly, wickedly proud as to feel hurt because you take an interest in my poor girl, and want to put a little happiness into her life—the still, sad life which she bears so patiently? God bless you, Miss Kitty; and if He doesn't, it won't be because I shall get tired of asking Him."

"And you'll not let her see the hat and jacket till I come, for fear she'll think something?"

At last Mrs. Graham [illegible] and [illegible] said:

"How you do think of everything. No, I'll keep the hat and jacket out of sight, and I'll have the dress on her, all ready."

When Christmas came Kitty scarcely remembered to put on the new apron that Mrs. Graham had finished with such loving care, scarcely gave a thought to the family festivities at home, so eager was she about Tom.

Luke was to go to Hudson Street just at noon, so that Tom might have the benefit of the utmost warmth of which the cold day was capable.

First she saw the dinner packed, and then Mr. Greenough, who had heard about the dinner with real interest, brought out a bottle of particularly nice sherry, and said to his wife—

"Put that in also. It will do those frozen-up souls good once in the year."

At last impatient Kitty was off.

Bridget and the basket filled all the spare space in the chaise, and when they reached Hudson Street, Luke took the dinner and followed Kitty upstairs, while Bridget stood by the horse's head, according to the programme.

He set the basket down where no one would be likely to notice it in opening the door, and then he stood out of sight himself, while Kitty went in.

There was Tom, in the warm crimson [illegible], happy-looking Tom as you [illegible] Christmas Day.

"I have come to take you for a ride," cried eager Kitty. "Will you go?"

It [illegible] see the look on Tom's face, the joy and wonder, and then the doubt, as the breathless question came.

"How will I get downstairs?"

And then Luke was called in, and that mystery was solved.

And then out of a closet came the warm jacket, and the hat, with its gay feather; and there were tears in Tom's eyes, and smiles round her lips, and she tried to say something, and broke down bitterly.

And then strong Luke took her up as if she were a baby and marched downstairs with her, while she heard Kitty say—but it all seemed to her like a dream, and Kitty's voice like a voice in a [illegible]

"I'm sorry there's nothing pretty to wear at this time of year."

The clocks had struck twelve when they left Hudson Street; the bells were ringing for one when they entered it again.

Bridget was gone, but a good-natured boy stood by the horse's head, and Kitty ran lightly upstairs, followed by Luke, with Tom in his arms.

Kitty threw open the door, and there was a table spread with as good a dinner as the heart could desire, with Tom's chair drawn up beside it.

Kitty waited to hear neither thanks nor explanations.

She saw Tom's brown eyes as they rested on the table, and that was enough.

She bent for one minute over the bright face—the cheeks which the outdoor air had painted red as the rose that had just opened in honor of the day—and left on the young, sweet, wistful lips a kiss, and then went silently down the stairs, leaving Tom and Tom's mother to their Christmas dinner.

A PITIFUL FATE!

How a Minister's Good Deed Landed Him in An Insane Asylum. The Story of His Escape.

To the Editor of the Milwaukee Sentinel:

SIR.—I have read a good many stories of late concerning the confinement of sane persons in lunatic asylums, and I am therefore prompted to relate a bit of personal experience.

In the year 18[illegible] while I was serving the Methodist Episcopal church in a New England town, a neighbor's house took fire. In common with others, I stood on the edge of the roof, passing buckets of water, exposed to intense heat on one side and freezing winds on the other. I took a fearful cold. For twenty-five years it worked havoc in my physical and mental systems. Nevertheless, I continued in my ministerial duties. I preached many a sermon when suffering intense agony. At certain periods, however, I would be comparatively well, and then again, my head would get heavy, my breathing labored, my appetite fickle. I would lose interest in life; feel sleepy at [illegible], and wakeful at midnight. My [illegible] Not knowing to [illegible], I [illegible] [illegible] feeling to [illegible]. But [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] away, and I was [illegible] prostrated. I was cautioned, cupped, blistered, and I treated [illegible] many [illegible] [illegible] I [illegible].

My case was a puzzle as much to my [illegible] as to myself. For one of these it first prescribed for delerium tremens, and yet I had never tasted intoxicating liquors. Another said I had brain disease, another spinal difficulty, another nervous prostration, heart disease, etc.

My mind eventually gave way, and in 1881 I was confined in the Brattleboro, Vt., Insane Asylum for six months. When I knew where I was, I demanded instant release. I then made a visit to Oceanic, N. J., but I had reckoned too much on my strength. I again lost my reason for a considerable period.

That I was in a desperate condition is evident. My blood had become infected with virus, which inflamed my brain occasionally and doomed me to an early death, for no physician gave me any hope of a cure. I finally found out what my real disorder was, and undertook my own treatment. In a few months I was restored to such a state of health as I never expected to enjoy. That was over three years ago, and my physical and mental health have remained intact to this day.

Last March I came West, and engaged in garden farming. In all that time I have not lost a day's work; have apparently enjoyed the most vigorous health and I expect to live the full term of life. The remedy I used was Warner's safe cure, and if I should live a thousand years, I should never tire of telling its praises.

You will confess with me, Mr. Editor, that such a change is remarkable. And you will, also, I am sure, agree with me, when I say that whatever created such a mental and physical restoration is deserving the highest praise.

Very truly yours,
REV. J. D. HOPKINS.

Dodge's Corners, Wis.

There are undoubtedly thousands who have an experience similar to the above to whom Mr. Hopkins's recital will appeal with persuasive force.

HOME-MADE SEA BREEZES.—To produce an artificial sea-air for sick rooms, a contemporary suggests the use of a solution of peroxide of hydrogen (ten volumes of strength) containing 1 per cent. of ozonic ether, iodine to saturation, and 2.50 per cent. of sea salt. The solution placed in a steam or hand spray diffuser can be distributed in the finest spray in the sick room at the rate of two fluid ounces in a quarter of a hour. It communicates a pleasant sea odor, and is probably the best purifier of the air of the sick room ever used. It is a powerful disinfectant, as well as deodorizer acting briskly on ozonized test solutions and papers.

EAR RINGS.—The custom of wearing earrings is so ancient that it is impossible to tell who set the fashion. There is a curious legend that Sarah, the wife of Abraham, was so embittered against Hagar that she resolved to disfigure her rival's face. Her better nature, however, triumphed, and she only pierced the lobes of her ears. Hagar, wishing to seem comely to Abraham, put rings of gold in her ears to cover the marks. Her Turkish descendants to-day feel that a woman dishonors her great ancestor if she fails to wear them. But many sensible girls and women in our land want a better reason for the fashion.

NETTLES.—The rose slug, so destructive to our rose bushes, may be destroyed by dusting the plants while wet with dew with air-slacked lime. Syringing the bushes with a strong solution of soap suds is also recommended.

A Wonderful Substance.

The results which are attending the administration by Drs Starkey & Palen, 1100 Girard St., Philadelphia, of their Compound Oxygen for chronic diseases, give new surprise to both patients and physicians every day. Nothing like these results have heretofore been known in the treatment of disease. If you have any ailment about which you are concerned, write to them for information about their new treatment and it will be promptly furnished.

New Publications.

A holiday book that should be in the hands of every young reader (and for that matter older ones) is "Our Young Folks Josephus. The Antiquities of the Jews and The Jewish Wars." Simplified by William Shepard. In the form that this ancient author has hitherto been presented to us, there was a great deal to take away from the interest and actual value of the reading. Translated directly from the Greek, without any effort at making clearer the dark places or smoothing the language, it required patience and study on the part of a reader to go through with it. In the hands of Mr. Shepard, however, all this has been changed. The narrative has been so simplified, that while retaining all its value as one of the most valuable relics of ancient history, it is presented with the charm and beauty of a romance. When the importance of reading Josephus is remembered by all those desiring to thoroughly inform themselves in regard to the most interesting period of ancient history, the character of Mr. Shepard's work will be fully appreciated. One reason Josephus is not more generally read is because of the usual ponderous way in which he has been given to readers of our language. This difficulty, however, is done away by this version. It is beautifully printed, and illustrated by a number of pictures from the pencil of Doré and others. Lippincott & Co., Publishers, Phila., Price $2.50.

MAGAZINES.

Vick's Floral Monthly for December like all that went before it is a splendid book for those interested in the garden and flowers. Price $1,25 per year. Published at Rochester, New York.

Babyland is a new monthly magazine devoted exclusively to the care of infants, young children, and the general interests of the nursery. Mothers and those having the care of younger children will find it a very useful publication. Published at 18 Spruce St., New York. Price 15 cents a number.

The [illegible] for December [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

Our Young Folks.

UNDER THE MISTLETOE.

BY E. W. P.

"WILL you be my lady, to serve and fight for when I am a knight?" said the page.

"That is much to ask," answered the Lady Christine, with dignity.

It was the holy Christmas-tide, and the children had wandered out together under the cloisters of the church adjoining the castle.

The snow lay on the earth, and every pillar and doorway was wreathed with the mystic mistletoe.

These were the days when the king's court and the castles of feudal lords were so many "academies of honor," to which came the sons and daughters of nobles, to be trained as knights and ladies.

When the page received this somewhat dubious reply from the lips of the Lady Christine, his heart faltered.

She was thirteen years of age, and above him in birth, being the cousin of the queen; but ever since she had come to court, as a future knight might, he had set her blue eyes in his heart, to be the lodestars ruling his destiny.

Following the customs of the day, he had been taught to treat all ladies with deference like superior beings; but he said to himself he would serve and love the Lady Christine only, and that she and his guardian saint would make his career.

Since taking this inward vow, as he learnt to guide his horse gracefully, to use the bow and the sword, and to manage a lance, he always kept before him the thought that she was watching him.

"Ah!" said Lady Christine slowly, and looking at him with unflinchingly earnest eyes, "to be my knight, you must not only be the bravest, but you must also play the harp like a minstrel, and know Latin, and be full of learning as Doctor Grammarius."

"If you will but think of it, how can I ever be as learned as Doctor Grammarius," replied the page dejectedly. "He pores over books all day long. Since he was a boy he told me he has pored over them. Certain I am the image of a damsel never ruled his heart. I cannot think of Doctor Grammarius riding a war-horse and going in quest of strange adventures."

"Nay, nor can I," said the Lady Christine, and both children laughed aloud at the picture of the doctor's lean legs astride of a charger and his learning-tired eyes peering out for robbers and distressed ladies.

"I shall not set my mind on the learning but you must play like a minstrel," persisted Lady Christine.

"I shall never cease to practice the harp in the intervals of fighting," said the boy, more cheerily. "And as I ride my war horse;—it shall be a white horse, with red eyes."

"And a tail that sweeps the ground," put in Lady Christine.

"Wherever I go, fighting the creature that says to be Lady Christine, and punishing the robbers, I shall wear your glove. I shall ever plead, 'For the peerless Lady Christine of the blue eyes, so that all the world will know your name."

"That pleaseth me," said the girl.

"One day," continued the boy drawing nearer, "I will come in the deep forest to a delicious spot—a cavern, the entrance covered with noxious plants. From it will emerge doleful plaints. It will seem a fearful place, my horse will shrink and tremble as I draw near it; my faithful hound will whine; but I shall lift my cross-hilted sword given me when I took my vow to St. George and the Archangel Michael, and, shouting the name 'Christine,' I shall rush in.

The boy sprang forward to illustrate his future action, his serious brightening, his smooth forehead aglow with the emotion of battle with evil, where his gallant young heart would be nerved by the thought of his lady.

"Oh! go on," cried Christine, clasping her hands and sighing with mingled satisfaction and interest.

"A lady will be in the cavern," continued the page, in lower tones, returning to her side, charmed by the wicked enchantments of a wizard. And as soon as some dragon will be guarding her. Oh! it will be a dire conflict between me and the monster. But I soon be the victor. I shall release the lady. Perhaps I shall be sore wounded; then she will lead me home to her castle. And perhaps as Elaine loved Launcelot she will love me and ask me to wed her. But I shall make answer, 'No! only one lady I live and serve, Christine of the Blue Eyes. To her belongs the victory—give her the praise.' And I shall ride away and leave her."

"I take you for my knight," said Lady Christine, approvingly, extending to the page a bough of mistletoe that she had been holding in her hand.

He took it, and with pretty reverence bowed his head over it. "I shall keep it always," he said. "It shall be my badge. I shall wear it all withered in my helmet at the tournament when I come to fight for your guest all opponents. And it shall be of good omen," continued the boy gayly. "For yesternight Doctor Grammarius told me strange sayings about the mistletoe, and they detail point to this being the emblem of love and forgiveness."

I believe what the doctor said, exclaimed Lady Christine, addressing the page in a new tone of proprietorship.

"The purport of one," replied Hugh, "was that the mistletoe was once a goodly tree, but that the cross on which our dear Lord's body hung having been made of its wood it withered away as if accursed; and yet so long as this world exists it must linger upon it—rootless, hanging on the branches of trees, set midst heaven and earth—to remind us of the Saviour's love."

Lady Christine was mightily pleased with this saying concerning the mistletoe, and then the children fell to chat once more of the future.

The legends of the Knights and King Arthur's Round Table; the ballads wherein were recorded the exploits of Charlemagne and Childe Roland; the lays of the minstrels furnished kindling examples of prowess; but Sir Hugh was to surpass all these heroes; and the damsel, as Zinet had been in chronicles, was to prove obdurate until her knight's fame was unsurpassed.

When the recital of these future combats with marauders, enchanters, dragons, tyrants, grew too grievous, Christine's heart would melt.

"I shall but seem stubborn and chiding," she would say in a tone of explanation. "All the time I shall watch you from my bower when you set forth on your quests; and I shall be always waiting for tiding of you; and as I read my missal I shall pray for you only; and when the minstrel is singing in the hall the exploits of knights, I shall say to myself, 'It is not of this knight or of that one, but of Sir Hugh he is singing.'"

"You must be stubborn to give me spirit," said the page.

The dusk of the short Christmas afternoon was closing in before it was settled when the relenting Christine was to send a token to Sir Hugh, that he might come and claim her as his bride.

"I shall cut off all my hair and braid it into a sword belt, as Sir Percivale's sister did for Sir Galahad; and I shall send it by a page, and when you receive it you may know you can come."

But at this suggestion the lad was aghast. To shear off those golden locks seemed to him sacrilegious.

So Christine agreed to leave her hair and send a bough of mistletoe instead.

One more grievous mishap was to befall Sir Hugh, wherein he was nigh to lose his life.

"Just as I am nearing the wood round the castle, three robbers are to rush out and fall upon me," began the boy.

"Six," interrupted Lady Christine.

Hewn and hacked by sword and lance, led by his page, she was to find him and tend his bleeding gashes.

After this pitiful adventure, when her knight was healed, the little maid said she would take him to the king and wed him before all the court.

But Hugh, greedy of fame, pleaded for a tournament, to win her over all opponents.

He had assisted at tourneys, and he was versed in their laws.

In breathless words he pictured the scene. Christine saw herself wearing a crown of gold; the queen of beauty, for whom the lordliest knights were contending, for the heralds had cried that she would wed the victor.

Then Hugh described the entrance within the lists of a mysterious knight, wearing no colors or heraldic device; but in whose helmet was fastened a withered bough of mistletoe.

Only a child or a poet could describe the feats to be accomplished by this knight of the mistletoe; every opponent was to be smitten down, unhorsed and rolled in the dust; every sword and lance raised against him to be broken and shivered, until at last no man would come forward to dispute the prize with him further.

Then, cried "Victor" by the heralds, he was to be led before Christine, and there, bowing low and laying his head, the strong knight would stand revealed before the claiming and marveling assembly as the long-lost Sir Hugh, who, seeking himself had won back his own wife.

"Then," said the page, "I shall lose the withered bough of mistletoe, and lay it at your feet, and then what will you do?"

Lady Christine looked gravely at him.

"I shall take up the bough, and I shall hold it over your head, and I shall kiss you under it," she replied.

"Will you give me a kiss now under the fresh bough as a pledge?" the page asked wistfully.

Then a pause; before long, in the same deliberate tones, the Lady Christine said: "I shall give you a kiss now, but I shall not give you another kiss until I give it at that tournament."

Then, holding the mistletoe bough above their heads and looking solemnly into each other's eyes, they gave each other in the gloaming the calm, unblushing kiss of childhood.

SINCE 1880 the increase of deposits in the state and savings banks of the country has been nearly $500,000,000.

THE suicide of a woman sixty-seven years old, in Santa Rosa, Cal., was attributed to hopeless love.

Catarrh Cured.

A clergyman, after suffering a number of years with that loathsome disease, Catarrh, after trying every known remedy with at success, at last found a prescription which completely cured and saved him from death. Any sufferer from this dreadful disease sending a self-addressed stamped envelope to Dr. Lawrence, 199 Dean Street, Brooklyn, New York, will receive the receipt free of charge.

THE FAIRY STAFF.

BY MAGGIE BROWNE.

A BOY named Frederick went out to seek his fortune, for his father was very poor, and there were so many children at home, that he could no longer find bread for them all to eat.

So travelling along the high road, it happened that Frederick found a little boy, sitting flat down in the dust, and crying piteously.

"What is the matter, now?" asked Fred, who was very kind-hearted.

"Alas!" sobbed the child. "This morning I came out to play, and, in chasing my ball, I ran on so far that I have lost my way, and cannot get home. What shall I do, for the night is coming, and my mother says that then wild beasts are abroad."

"Don't cry," answered Frederick; "I will find your house for you."

And taking the tired little boy in his arms, he walked on, stopping at every house, and asking if they had lost a little boy there.

Some answered him crossly, and some laughed, but no one knew the child.

At last night came, and Frederick gave the little one some of his own supper, and lay down with him in his arms. On the third day they found an old hut in a forest, and a woman crying there.

"That is my mother," said the boy, running in to comfort her.

So Frederick went on his way glad enough; but the child was very sorry, because he had nothing to give but a little gold key.

"You must take it," he said to Frederick. "It is not worth much, but it may be of some use."

So Frederick put it in his pocket, and journeyed on. He had not gone far before he found an old man groaning in the woods.

"What is the matter, good father?" asked Frederick.

"Alas!" replied the old man, "I have had a fall, and I must die here, for I can never reach home."

"That you shall not," answered Frederick, "for I will carry you."

And lifting the old man on his shoulders, with much trouble, he set out again on the road.

It was an entire day's day's journey to the old man's house, and Frederick was obliged often to set him down and rest, but he did not once complain. So when they reached the old man's house, the latter exclaimed:

"Ah! my son, why have I nothing to give you? Here, take my staff. It is only an oaken staff, but it may be of some use to you."

"Indeed, I will not take your staff," said Frederick. "I do not want any reward."

"No; you must take it," insisted the old man. "Unless you do, I shall be ill through vexation."

So finding the old man so much in earnest, Frederick took the staff and continued on his way.

Just about nightfall he came to a giant's castle—a monstrous building, taller than the greatest tree, with huge towers, and a hundred steps leading up to the door.

In this door sat the giant himself; a very fierce and cruel giant he was, and frightful to look at; but he was cunning as he was ugly, and when Frederick came to the castle he thought that it was a pretty little cottage, with a white-haired old dame sitting by her spinning-wheel in the door.

"Can I stay here to-night?" asked Frederick. "I will chop your wood, or milk your cow, or do anything for you, you like."

"My wood is chopped and my cow is milked," said the old woman. "But come in, and you shall have a bed and supper for all that."

So Frederick, suspecting no evil, went in, and after eating heartily of bread and milk, said his prayers and went to bed.

Think, then, how astonished he was in the morning to find himself in a golden bed, in a room with a monstrous high ceilings and ten great windows, all hung with damask!

While he stared about him, and wondered how he came there, he heard a heavy foot on the stairs, and a sound of loud breathing, and in walked the giant, on seeing whom Frederick was dreadfully alarmed, and gave himself up for lost.

"Let us see!" said the giant, coming up to the bed. "Are you there, Frederick; are you there?"

Then he took him up in one great hand and felt him carefully.

"Thin! thin!" he said to himself, much disgusted. "He won't be fit to eat under a week. I must give him some of my fattening stews."

"I won't eat a bit," Frederick thought to himself; but, in the first place, he became very hungry; next, when the stew came, it was so good, you never smelt or saw anything so delicious.

By-and-bye, Frederick ate it, every bit, up. That night he slept "like a top," just as also the next morning arrived a "broil." Frederick said to himself every time, "I won't eat;" but he did eat all the time, and grew fat so fast that one morning the giant looked quite delighted, and said to himself, "Almost fat enough! almost fat enough!"

Frederick was terribly frightened at that, and went to the windows, but there was no chance there. Then he went to the door.

"You can't open me," said the door.

"I would if I had a key," answered Frederick, and putting his hand in his pocket he felt there the key of gold, which he had forgotten.

As soon as he did that the door opened wide, saying, "I might as well let you out, for you have there the key that will open any door."

In this way Frederick got out of the castle; but he had not gone far when the windows, spying him, began to call out, "Master your meat is running away! master, your meat is running away!"

And out came the giant running after him; and, having such long legs, in three steps he had caught him up, and was ready to seize him.

But Frederick was determined to die there, if die he must, and struck at the giant with the old man's staff, which he had brought with him without thinking of it.

No sooner had it touched the giant than he fell down, roaring out:

"Oh, I am dead! I am killed!"

And so he was, sure enough; and Frederick took possession of his castle, and lived there like a great lord; for, of course you know, and I suppose you knew all the time, though he was never suspected of it, that the staff was a fairy staff, given him for his kindness of heart.

ELEPHANT-BURGLARS.—A party of soldiers in India were not long ago placed in charge of a granary, over which some of their number were always on guard.

After a time their attention was attracted to the ambiguous behavior of certain wild elephants that lived in the neighboring forest.

The animals were observed to lurk about in a suspicious manner.

The object of their sinister manœuvre was not, however, guessed. By-and-by the herd left the place, leaving only one aged female behind them.

It happened just at this juncture, that some disturbance in a village a little distance off necessitated the withdrawal of the guard, and one fine morning the soldiers marched away, leaving the granary unprotected.

No sooner had this happened than the old she-elephant, who was a confederate of the herd, by some means got news of the soldiers' departure conveyed to the gang, and back they all came.

They were evidently there with a purpose, for two camp-followers, who had been left by the guard to see after some military kit that was not taken on the march, state that the elephants advanced so briskly to the scene that they had no time whatever to escape, so, climbing up into a tree, they became spectators of the burglary which the herd proceeded in the most workmanlike manner to commit.

They state that, first of all, the elephants examined the building on all sides, but finding it a four-square mass of masonry without any such weak points as doors or windows, they tested the corners.

At last, having decided that one particular angle was the best for their purpose, they stood aside, while the giant of their number came to the front and attacked the brickwork.

For a long time the others remained in their ranks, watching their vast companion at work, and, when he withdrew, another took his place and continued the job.

As soon as he got tired, a third came forward, and by this time, the breach being large enough for co-operation, several joined in, and began tearing out the bricks as fast as possible, so as to make the opening sufficiently commodious for their entrance.

When this had been accomplished the herd divided into small parties of three and four, each of which in turn marched into the granary, ate their monstrous bodies full of rice, and gave place to the next.

Meanwhile, those who were satisfied retired to some distance, but in different directions, and there acted as scouts for their friends who were eating.

The whole of the herd, in this methodical manner, enjoyed themselves to the utmost extent of their capacity, and were already, apparently, congratulating themselves upon the success of their exploit, when a shrill cry from one of their sentries warned them of approaching danger, and the marauders hastily decamped.

The soldiers had come back to their post; and when they saw the havoc that had been wrought, and the elephants tranquilly surveying them from the brow of a hill about a mile off, their wrath, natural enough under the circumstances, was such that they loaded up the fieldpiece which accompanied the detachment, and let drive at the burglars.

The elephants, however, had only come to dine off rice, and had no appetite for five-pounder shells by way of dessert. So they leisurely strolled away into the forest, trumpeting as they went.

INFUSE as much elegance as possible into your thoughts as well as your actions: and, as you avoid vulgarities, you will increase the enjoyment of life, and grow in the respect of others.

Important.

Philadelphians arriving in New York via Cortland Street Ferry by taking the 6th Avenue Elevated Train corner Church and Cortland Streets, can reach the Grand Union Hotel, 42d Street opposite Grand Central Depot in twenty minutes, and save $1 Carriage Hire. Those going to Saratoga or other Summer resorts via Grand Central Depot, all baggage will be transferred from Hotel to this Depot, FREE. 600 handsomely furnished rooms $1, and upwards per day. Restaurant the best and cheapest in the City. Families can live better for less money at the Grand Union, than at any other first class hotel in the city.

ONE BY ONE.

BY WILLIAM BYRNE.

Though from the boughs to which they've long been clinging,
The Autumn leaves are dropping one by one,
Yet from their dust, new forms of beauty, springing,
Shall smile again in Summer's gentle sun.

Though one by one the pearly drops of morning,
From drooping flowers, on viewless pinions rise,
We'll see them yet the gorgeous clouds adorning
With glowing arches of celestial dyes.

Though one by one the stars are fading slowly
That all night long kept vigil in the sky,
The distant mountain peaks, like prophets holy,
Proclaim that morning's light and song are nigh.

Though with slow step goes forth the sower weeping,
And on earth's lap his precious treasure leaves
Yet comes the harvest, with its joyous reaping,
When shall be gathered home the ripened sheaves.

Though one by one the friends we fondly cherish
Withdraw from ours, the cold and trembling hand,
And leave us sorrowful, they do not perish—
They yet shall greet us in a fairer land.

Yes, from all climes, where'er the faithful slumber
'Neath scorching suns, or Arctic snow and frost,
Stainless they'll rise, in myriads without number;
All, all shall meet—there shall not one be lost.

MAN'S INCONSISTENCY.

TAKEN as a whole, and judged impartially, human nature will be found to be a very contrary, inconsistent bit of creation, and as perfect a model for a kaleidoscope as anything the mind of man could conceive.

Supplied for the most part with a goodly share of the milk of human kindness, it has also been endowed with a faculty for turning the milk sour at very short notice, and not unfrequently it happens that the richest, sweetest cream is not only the first to turn, but also the bitterest, and most lasting in its bitterness, after the turning process has been accomplished.

There is a phrase which hath it that "men were deceivers ever." Not deceivers so much in fact or intention as contrary and many-sided from the very inconsistency of their nature.

No two people are entirely alike, and it very frequently happens that the same man—always supposing him an honest, well-intentioned fellow on the whole, with no more than the average bit of alloy in his composition—is far from being alike two days in succession.

Even the trained philosopher, in the first flush of surprise—before he has had time for that quick search for the silver lining to the cloud which renders him so superior to ordinary mortals in the matter of bearing trouble—loses his ordinary self-control, and shows that the blow tells; and as he receives the taps which Fate sometimes loves to administer with the point of her finger, he cannot always conceal the fact that his 'temper is up," and the desire for "breaking out" in some shape or form rages within him.

It is mostly in the reception of these "love taps" that the individual peculiarities of people show themselves. What one will laugh at and take as a jest, another will accept in sober earnest at least, if not as a matter of life and death.

What to one is a mole-hill, and, indeed, hardly that, to another is a mountain whose ascent is well-nigh impossible; and the former class of beings—merry, good-tempered, jovial souls as they are, "the salt of the earth," morally speaking—have no hesitation whatever in calling the latter queer, cranky, crazy, and with some show of reason, to their cheerful, well-balanced mind.

But, nevertheless, the criticisms are a trifle unjust, for jolly folks, blessed with that best of all gifts, the knack of taking cheerfully and philosophically whatever falls to their lot, have their own peculiarities in other ways.

Parents will sometimes see these queer traits in their children, and try to "whip it out of them," as they say; but they might as well try to stop the sea from coming to a certain point, like Canute of old. One is as much nature's will and doing as the other.

It is to these persistent attempts at trampling down and totally destroying what is evidently planted and meant to grow, this moral rough handling, so to speak, that many children, with the grit and nerve and general right impulses which ought to make them good, useful members of society, owe their ultimate downfall.

Most people have one code for bringing up children; the latter must all conform to it, whether it suits their temperaments or not. If they do wrong in any shape or form, a whipping or a scolding, or at least a sample of that perpetual bellowing or bullying which is the ruin of so many youngsters, is their portion.

Yet "the child," we are told, "is father to the man," and everybody knows there are plenty of men who can be led into anything on the face of the earth by kindness, and yet are the ugliest-tempered, most mulish beings alive when anything like stiff-backed coercion is attempted.

Some children are said to be born bad; but even these can be more easily governed by judicious kindness. Indeed, with even "children of a larger growth" it will generally work like a charm.

Forbearance is something which can hardly be too highly estimated; through life it is the friend of not only the recipient, but also of the one who exercises it. Something invaluable when dealing with our friends—especially in the matter of their peculiarities—it will not often be abused when extended to our enemies.

It is something of which we need never be ashamed, which will always brighten the past when we look back, and save it from being absolutely miserable. It is, indeed, a virtue in itself—one which, like the greatest of all—charity, will certainly cover a multitude of sins.

Grains of Gold.

Behind bad luck comes good luck.

Antiquity is not always a mark of rarity.

Better go around than fall into the ditch.

When a thing is done advice comes too late.

A pound of care will not pay an ounce of debt.

There is a sweet sleep at the end of a long road.

Clean water never came from a dirty place.

A single fact is worth a ship load of argument.

A plaster is but small amends for a broken head.

A man in a passion rides a horse that runs away with him.

An ass that carries you is better than a horse that throws you.

A man is little the better for liking himself, if nobody else like him.

To be wise before the act is better than to philosophise on it afterward.

The world forgives with difficulty the fact that one can be happy without it.

Let no one overload you with favors; you will find it an insufferable burden.

Conscience is the voice of the soul; the passions are the voice of the body.

Keep right thy aim and good thy will, keep all thy acts from passion free.

Silks, broadcloth and jewels are often bought with other people's money.

A slip of the foot may be soon recovered, but that of the tongue perhaps never.

When the good man dies the tears are shed, which in life he prevented from flowing.

Whatever limit sincerity imposes upon our words, let us obey, even if it be to silence.

Good taste rejects excessive nicety; it treats little things as little things, and is not hurt by them.

Want of reverence for the name of God, especially in the young, leads directly to infidelity.

Use charity with all; be ever generous in thought or deed—help others along life's thorny pathway.

A sympathy with the pains and pleasures of others is the foundation upon which we build our social virtues.

Humility, sweet as it may be as a trait of character, may degenerate into vice, if not held up by self-respect.

That only can with propriety be styled refinement which, by strengthening the intellect, purifies the manners.

Don't take anything for granted; get to the bottom of things. Neither be a sham yourself nor be fooled by shams.

No man can honestly pray to be delivered from this world's temptations who does not persistently strive to keep out of them.

As the sword of the best-tempered metal is most flexible, so the truly generous are most pliant and courteous in their behavior.

Happiness is not outside, but inside. A good heart and a clear conscience bring happiness, which no riches and no circumstances alone ever will do.

"Our eyes," says a witty writer, "were put in front that we might see before we leap, and not behind that we might recognise a chasm after we have fallen into it."

No grace is more necessary to the Christian worker than fidelity—the humble grace that marches on in sunshine and storm, when no banners are waving, and there is no music to cheer the weary feet.

Femininities.

A woman in Mansfield, this State, has become insane over politics.

It is a mighty mean married man who would wilfully eat crackers in bed.

It is said that Japanese women have never seen, and do not like, the use of pins.

Love's sacrifice—Saying she is not hungry when asked to have oysters, after the opera.

About the only time a man wishes he were a woman is when he has to give up his seat to a woman in a street car.

Women and girls own nearly one-half of the deposits in the savings banks of Massachusetts, having to their credit $118,000,000.

A negro woman in Leavenworth, Ks., refused to allow her child to be buried in a grave which had been dug "crosswise of the world."

A woman was seen recently in Naples carrying a coffin on her head, chatting gayly with a man who walked empty-handed at her side.

An old maid in Nashville keeps a parrot that swears, and a monkey which chews tobacco. She says between the two, she doesn't miss a husband very much.

"How pale and quiet he looks!" said a sympathising old lady at the funeral. "Y-yes," sobbed the widow, "John allers was p-pale and q-quiet like."

Diamonds are, from their extreme brilliancy and hardness of color, becoming to none but women of high color. A pale woman in blazing diamonds is ridiculous.

The Sultan of Morocco has just celebrated his thousandth wedding. Think of that, young man, when it seems to you that you can never go through the ordeal of even one.

Mrs. Lucy Stone, in speaking of what has been done in Massachusetts, says that idiots, lunatics, felons, and women, are the only persons who have not the right to vote in that State.

Female clerks employed at the polls in Tacoma, W. T. at the recent election, got overwhelmed with their duties, it is stated, and several men had to be sworn in to finish the work.

A good wife is to a man wisdom, strength and courage; a bad one is confusion, weakness and despair. No condition is hopeless to a man where the wife possesses firmness, decision and economy.

It is a fact that first on the list of noble workers with the needle is the Empress Eugenie, who gives a small portion of each day to tapestry work, while her evenings are devoted to knitting for the poor.

"Oh, Clara, did you see that Miss Astor was married the other day?" "Was she, dearie? Well, I hope the wedding was a happy one." "Oh, I guess it was. She had a satin train over three yards long!"

A man was lately fined $10 for beating his wife. A few days after another man was fined $50 for vagrancy. From this it may be inferred that it is better for a man to beat his wife than to do nothing.

In Thibet one woman may have two, three, or even four husbands. When a Thibet woman wants a new bonnet, she has only to let the fact be known, and the four husbands start on a race to the millinery store.

A handsome cluster corsage of flowers is now sent home with all the costumes furnished by Parisian modistes, except the plainest walking costumes, and even these have often some trifling addition to the dress itself.

Margaret de Valois, with whom most of the prominent Frenchmen of her day were at some time or another desperately in love, had heavy cheeks, too prominent eyes, which were often congested, and a thick, hanging under-lip.

"How is it, Joe, that you are always advising everybody to marry, and yet you show no hurry about taking a wife yourself?" *Joe*: "Because I'm too much of a gentleman to help myself until everybody else is supplied!"

Don't marry a man to get rid of him, or to oblige him, or simply because he asks you. Don't marry in haste lest you repent at leisure. Love can wait. Don't imagine because two persons are miserable when apart, that they will be happy when together.

The Society of Hospital Surgeons and the Society of Hospital Physicians, of Paris, are unanimously opposed to women for house surgeons or doctors, and advance various reasons for having come to this conclusion, which they will submit to the Prefect of the Seine.

A Chicago clergyman is delivering a course of five lectures on "Woman's Place in Society." All his five sermons cannot controvert the fact that if a woman isn't pretty her place in society is one on a lovely sofa, among the other wall-flowers, every time.

Sofa pillows filled with spikes of green pine and hemlock, with a pine bough and appropriate quotation embroidered on the scarlet covers, are among the attractive novelties. These pillows retain the delicious piney odor a long time, and are said to be hygienic.

A recent French writer thinks the unmarried life of English women delightful, but when they marry, the contrast is wholly in favor of the French females. When a Frenchwoman marries, he says, she is emancipated, while an English girl enters upon a condition of slavery.

The acquaintance of the female mind with the mysteries of commerce and finance is extensive and paralyzing. "Why," said a well-to-do young woman, who had just received a dry-goods bill, "why do they keep on sending me this? I know well enough I got those things last summer, and what is the use of reminding me?"

An old maid of Scotland, after reading aloud to her two sisters, also unmarried, the births, marriages and deaths in the ladies' corner of a newspaper, thus moralized: "Weel, weel, weel, these are solemn events—death and marriage; but ye ken they're what we must all come to." "Eh—eh, Miss Jinny, but ye ha' been long spared," was the reply of the youngest sister.

News Notes.

Pumpkin pie festivals are all the rage in Illinois.

A two-headed child is reported from Chattanooga, Tenn.

Three thousand horses die every week in London, it is stated.

Twenty-five ladies are doing jury service in Columbia county, W. T.

The Spiritualists of Boston are erecting a temple at a cost of $250,000.

Canada is excited about the influx of Chinese coolies to her western possessions.

Boston is believed to have more music teachers than any other city in the United States.

An oyster "measuring two feet in diameter" (local papers say) was recently sold in Paris for $1.60.

The employees of the Government in all its branches number in the aggregate 130,000 persons.

The question of compulsory attendance on religious exercises is again being agitated at Harvard.

The people of Hancock county, Ga., have decided to hang the first man caught house-burning there.

Germany has about 200,000 tramps. The number of tramps in Italy has never been ascertained.

A silver geometrical spider perched in the centre of his web and mounted on plush, is the latest pen-wiper.

A nervous Salem county, New Jersey, man voted a festival circular instead of a ticket on election day.

Texas has now nearly 7,000,000 cattle, according to assessors' returns, valued at something like $91,000,000.

Of 133 male children recently born in Dallas, Texas, 129 of them, it is stated, were christened "Grover."

At a recent church festival in Massachusetts there were on the table 25 kinds of pie and 17 varieties of pickles.

A 16 year-old New Hampshire lad hanged himself in his room a few nights ago while in a state of somnambulism.

Peach and Japan plum trees continue to bloom at Green Cove Springs, Fla. So also do big-mouthed alligators.

There are 10,000 teetotalers in the railway service of Great Britain, and 13,000 among the sailors in the naval service.

Our navy, it is stated, now contains 1,562 commissioned officers, or one officer to every five men and 45 officers to every ship.

According to the new French law, drunkenness in either husband or wife will be regarded as a sufficient cause for divorce.

About 50,000 woodchucks have been killed in New Hampshire the present year, upon which a bounty of ten cents each is paid.

A hunter in the Black Lake region of New York State recently accomplished the remarkable feat of killing two deer at one shot.

The Railway Employees' Mutual Benefit Association is no more. The death rate among members was so high that it killed the society.

The women of Siam have petitioned the king to take from their husbands the right to pledge them in the payment of gambling debts.

A New York inventor has made a machine by which he claims to reduce the temperature of a room to 65 degrees below zero if necessary.

In Madagascar no one could read sixty years ago, but now there are nearly 200,000 on the island who have some part of the Bible and read it.

The advertised rents of houses to let in Washington, D. C., exhibit a wide range of figures. The lowest are quoted at $15 per month, and the highest reaches $8,750.

Cleveland is the first successful Presidential aspirant whose name begins with C. Geo. Clinton, DeWitt Clinton, Crawford, Calhoun, Clay, Chase, all failed.

Abilene, Texas, which was a wilderness three years ago, is now a flourishing town, inhabited by thousands of people, and with an assessed valuation of $1,400,000.

There are 84,000 newspapers printed in the world, nearly 32,000 of which are published in Europe and North America. This leaves a poor showing for the rest of the earth.

Paper was king in Denver on the occasion of a grand carnival, when all the ladies and gentlemen appeared in clothes made of that article. Some of the effects were startling.

When the emancipation of slaves in the British colonies took place in 1834 their number was 780,993, and in payment for them Great Britain distributed $100,000,000 among their owners.

A man who had held the office of coroner in a Long Island town, died a few days ago, and before he was buried there were thirty applicants actively endeavoring to secure the position thus vacated.

Berlin comes to the front with a new institution for public convenience. An umbrella loan society, with branch offices all over the city, will supply the needs of members caught in a sudden shower.

A good authority calculates that the six leading nations of Europe have standing armies of about 2,700,000 men, with reserves which could be brought into the field within three months, of about 4,000,000.

A condemned wife-murderer in the jail at Lima, Ohio, who had made several unsuccessful attempts to commit suicide, finally succeeded a few days ago by swallowing several strips of flannel and cotton cloth.

Paying The Penalty.

BY PAUL H. DENHAM.

NINETEEN years of utter loneliness, and to-day I have been told there will soon be relief and rest for me, the relief of stilled pulse, the rest of the grave.

Have I one regret, one hold on life too strong to relinquish?

Not one.

You, to whom I write, have lived at Knowlton, though it is nineteen long years since you went from me, and you know how beautiful the grand old house and the wide grounds are, how large the income that keeps them in perfect order.

It is forty-five years since I was born here, and where I was orphaned when I was three days old.

My grandfather adopted me, giving me my mother's name, and I grew up to the proud place of heiress of Knowlton, educated privately at the utmost care and expense, with my naturally haughty disposition, fostered by flattery and injudicious counsel, till I was seventeen.

I was far more of a woman then, in self-possession, pride, and matured beauty, than many are at twice that age.

I had presided over my grandfather's house since I was a mere child, with housekeeper and servants entirely under my control.

Adjoining Knowlton was the Barclay estate, rivalling onywn home in beauty, and it was a pet scheme of my grandfather that I should fascinate Louis Barclay, and by my marriage join the two finest estates in the county.

Louis Barclay was five years older than myself, and I remembered him only as a boy, for he was sent abroad to be educated when I was but nine years old.

Still, I had my day dreams of this possible suitor until my seventeenth year, when Horace Grierson came to Knowlton.

My grandfather, feeling the infirmities of age creeping upon him, advertised for a private secretary and companion, for we were very poor in relatives, and Horace Grierson was the applicant chosen.

Let me describe him to you, and let me say a word here of my own appearance.

You remember me only as an aged-looking woman, a great invalid, pale and wan.

But at seventeen I was tall and slender, with a profusion of deep auburn hair, large, brown eyes, a fair blooming complexion and perfect features.

I was a lady by birth and education, heiress to a large fortune, and of a warm, impulsive disposition, held ever in check by my master passion, pride.

Horace was a poet, with large, blue eyes, waving, golden hair, effeminate in feature, but with the wide, full brow of intellect, soft-voiced and gentle.

He was an orphan, he told my grandfather, hoping to win laurels by his pen, but forced to curb his poetic fervor, to earn his bread in some such position as the one offered him at Knowlton.

We were not lonely in those days.

The grand old house was always filled with summer guests, and in the winter we varied the frequent visits to town by balls, concerts, private theatricals, and other social gatherings at home.

It was but natural that I should be a belle at all such festive gatherings.

I could enhance my beauty by the most costly dress and jewels, I had musical talent, and the vivacity natural to unclouded girlhood.

Suitors were not wanting for Miss Knowlton, but I turned scornfully from all.

And yet, the one who never forced attention upon me, the one who held aloof in quiet dignity, the one who never seemed to think of love was winning from me a life-long devotion.

Every day, in the familiar intercourse of our home circle, I found some new charm in Horace.

Even his delicate, refined beauty became lovelier to me than the more manly attributes of admirers.

He touched depths of my nature I never knew existed till they sprang to life under his musical voice, and I found myself wandering with him into fields of poesy and imagination, comprehending his inspirations, suggesting new subjects, absorbed as himself in visionary dreams.

Every day the exquisite beauty of my grandfather's secretary became more delicate, the great blue eyes more spiritual in expression.

It was in early summer I awoke from my dream.

Horace and I had few interruptions in our walks and talks for several weeks, for I was resting from the winter's gaieties, before the house filled with summer guests.

So we two rode, drove, walked and talked, while my grandfather nursed an attack of chronic trouble he had had for years, with the housekeeper for his attendant.

But one morning her sent for me.

He was in a fearful rage, and even I, not unaccustomed to his fits of furious temper, was frightened by the glare of his eyes, the thunder of his voice.

It was soon made apparent what had excited him.

Horace had pleaded his love for me, and asked permission to win my love.

Frightened as I was, my heart bounded with a proud joy to hear that.

But it soon sank again.

In terms not to be misunderstood, my grandfather placed before me the choice I must make.

If I accepted Horace's attentions, I must leave Knowlton at once and forever.

If I refused them, he must be as quickly and finally dismissed.

I was given until evening to make my decision, and gladly escaped from the room.

But my mind was in a whirl.

I loved Horace.

I knew it then, as I have known it all these weary years since.

And yet I could not face poverty and obscurity for his sake.

I was unfit to be a poor man's wife.

I knew no bread-winning art, no money-saving accomplishment.

I could never keep a small house neat, cook simple food and do my own sewing.

I could not.

Love and pride had a sore struggle, and pride triumphed.

Horace sought me and pleaded his cause, not cringingly, but as a man who had won a woman's heart, and claimed the right to cherish and protect what was his own.

Never had I seen the pure, sensitive face so noble and manly, the slender figure so proudly erect.

And when I answered as pride dictated, though the blue eyes grew almost wild with pain, the face deathly in its pallor, my lover made no moan, but took a coldly courteous leave of me.

In an hour he left the house, never to return, and I went to the woods, alone, to moan out my misery and regret.

When it was too late, I would have trampled my pride under my feet, to keep my love pure and bright.

But it was in vain I wept, in vain I poured out my heart in bitter regret.

Horace was gone.

Returning home, I was met by a servant, white and terrified, who told me my grandfather was dead.

He had broken a blood-vessel, and lived but a few minutes.

I was owner of Knowlton, untrammelled, free to wed whom I would, and Horace had left me in angry contempt at my mercenary rejection of his love.

When the funeral was over, when the many friends who came to console me were gone, when I was once more alone in the grand home that was my inheritance, I longed unutterably for my lover, my friend, my soul companion.

I was, bitterly lonely, though I had always some dear friend, only too willing to share my solitude with me.

But Horace was gone.

Twice in the year that followed I had an advertisement inserted in the newspapers, which only he would understand, recalling him.

But he never came.

When June roses bloomed again, my housekeeper told me, in great excitement, that Louis Barclay was coming home.

Workmen were preparing the long-closed house for it's master's return, and there was a corps of servants engaged.

Later, we heard that the young heir had come home, an invalid, far gone in consumption, the gossips said.

I paid little heed.

What was the young millionaire to me, in those lonely, weary days?

But when he had been a month at home, my housekeeper brought me a strange message.

Mr. Louis Barclay was dying, and wished to see me.

My amazement was great, but the wishes of the dying are sacred, and I ordered my carriage, and drove at once to obey the summons.

There came the bitterest drop in my cup of regret and remorse.

Louis Barclay, seated in an armchair, ghastly white, dying, was my lover, Horace Grierson.

He too had known of the romance our relatives had planned, and had come to Knowlton in the disguise of a poor man, to try to win my love himself alone, if he found he could love me.

"I thought my love was all turned to scorn and to hatred when you sent me from you," he said; "but it was stronger than my life. I thought to die, and never see your fair, false face, and I could not. Death would not come till I had seen you once again. And you have suffered, too. I see it in your changed, wasted face. You loved me, in spite of that cold rejection of my hand; you loved me."

I was sobbing at his feet, kissing his hands pouring out my misery in broken words.

While I knelt there the change that come but once passed over his face, and with a smile and sweet words of forgiveness for me, who had killed him, he died.

I was carried home unconscious.

I raved long in brain fever, recovering with white hair, and a face seamed with sorrow's lines.

For months I would see no one, shutting myself up in my own room, praying to die and join my lover.

Then I found you.

Do you remember, dear, how I found you, on the road, sobbing over your mother's corpse, a little waif, not ten years old, sent to comfort me?

My sore heart craved love, and you gave it.

My hands, weighted with gold, longed to find some good work, and they lifted you from sorrow and poverty, to happiness and health.

You grew to a fair, sweet womanhood under my care, and when you loved, no love of mine opposed the choice your heart dictated.

I have no relatives to wrong when I will my home, my wealth to you, who will bring love, light and happiness into the house that has been for years haunted by a life's remorse and suffering endured in paying the penalty of my pride.

A READY GIVER.

This is the time of all the year
Of Christmas glee, of mirth, and cheer,
And when the least who gives away
Some trifle on this happy day,
Is worthy to be sung in lays,
How great should be his meed of praise—
The painter, who so oft devotes
His life, as 'twere, to giving coats?

—WM. MACKINTOSH.

Humorous.

A counter fit—A ready-made suit.

A tie vote—A matrimonial engagement.

Name me and you destroy me—Silence.

When is a wager like a unit? When it is won.

What is the centre of gravity? The letter V.

Invariably a risky thing—An insurance policy.

When is a sailor not a sailor? When he is a-board.

A boxing match—Competition between rival coffin-makers.

The bluntest man frequently says the most cutting things.

Which is the smallest bridge in the world? The bridge of your nose.

What is that, although black itself, enlightens the whole world? Ink.

What is that which is enough for one, but frequently too much for two? The wedding-ring.

"I'm particularly uneasy on this point," as the fly said to the boy who stuck him on the end of a pin.

Why is it absurd to ask a pretty girl to be candid? Because, however frank, she cannot be plain.

When it comes to propriety, now, it must be admitted that a dressmaker always does a fitting thing.

When you listen to the sound of a drum, why are you like a just judge? Because you hear both sides.

A stranger asked a young scapegrace to show him a good boarding-place, and he directed him to a carpenter-shop.

At what time of life may a man be properly said to be a vegetable? At 70, because long experience makes him sage.

"What's a fellow to do, doctor, when he's in company and has nothing to say?" "He should say it quietly," replied the doctor.

"Do you know why that girl over there is called honey?" "Because she's so sweet, I suppose." "Yes, sweet and bee-loved."

It is said that an eminent artist recently painted a snow-storm so naturally that he caught a severe cold by sitting near it with his coat off.

A German writer states very seriously, that in the United States there is such a scarcity of thieves that they are obliged to offer a reward for them.

"What is the big corner in pork I hear about?" asked Laura, across the cheery tea-table. "The big corner in pork," replied her hubby, "is the ham."

"Don't you think that A. has a great deal of moral principle?" asked one gentleman of another. "He ought to have," was the reply, "for no one ever knew him to use any."

A clergyman in a church, on a recent occasion, discovered he had forgotten his notes. As it was too late to send for them, he said to his audience that this morning he should have to depend upon the Lord for what he might say, but in the evening he would come better prepared.

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That instantly stops the most excruciating pains, allays inflammation, and cures Congestions, whether of the lungs, stomach, bowels, or other glands or organs, by one application.
If seized with threatened
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ABOUT THE DAY.

OUR Christmas observances, like our common language, come from various contributory sources, and in part are to be found followed in almost every country of Europe.

Saint Nicholas, the children's patron saint is common to all the Continent, and under his name of Santa Klaus is no stranger here, as good little boys and girls know well.

The practice of acting plays or interludes by "mummies," which marked the birth of the stage, although dying out here, is still kept up in and about Germany.

From Germany, too, we borrow our Christmas tree institution. From Scandinavia through our Saxon ancestors comes the yule log celebrations, which, on the other hand, is so fast falling into disuse. Modern fireplaces are not made to accommodate logs, nor would modern houses bear the heat of the fires which roared on old hearths so fiercely that all prudent housewives were careful to have their chimneys swept before Christmas.

In the great open rooms of old houses, and no less in spacious halls, fires were essential, and great heat a necessity. No wonder the yule log was held in esteem; that it was marked down from one yule tide to another, and brought home on Christmas Eve with music and dancing.

Round the yule log gradually clustered some quaint customs, of which Herrick makes mention. Of the bringing home of the log he writes the well-known lines:

Come, bring with a noise,
My merrie, merrie boys,
The Christmas log to the firing.

The practice of keeping a part of one log wherewith to light that of the next year he elsewhere refers to:

Kindle the Christmas brand, and then
Till sunne set let it burne,
Which quencht then lay it up againe
Till Christmas next returne.
Part must be kept wherewith to teend
The Christmas log next year,
And where 'tis safely kept, the fiend
Can do no mischief there.

Yule candles were also burnt on Christmas Eve; sometimes kept lighted the whole night through, to keep evil spirits away, corresponding ill-luck being consequent upon its extinction—another very prevalent superstition.

In fact, almost every Christmas custom has its origin in the dark ages, some of them, like the hanging up of the indispensable mistletoe, coming to the present in direct descent from the past; others, like the mummings and the Lord of Misrule, being adopted by the clergy and modified so as to offer some outlet for high spirits, without allowing unbridled license.

The custom of pouring out an offering as it were to all nature, which in Norway finds such graceful compliance in the ceremonial of fastening on Christmas Day a little sheaf of corn to the gable-end of the house for the homeless birds, in other places has in it more of selfish superstition, as we find proof again in Herrick's verses.

Wassaile the trees that they may beare
You many a plum and many a peare,
For more or less fruits they will bring
And you do give them wassailing.

On the Continent they have an even less kindly Christmas custom of coercing the trees into fruition by beating them, which, however, will also be familiar to students of fairy folk-lore.

It is not altogether, perhaps, so much a joyous strain is rung out from the belfry "on Christmas Day in the morning," as belief in the efficacy of concentrated bells to keep away evil spirits, although it may well have been another instance of the employment of music to make the glad day happy and joyous, and bright. The waits in England, the sport of much small wit, yet usher in with fitting carols our great festival, and, on a still night when the white snow carpet deadens every sound, give to it an added charm, particularly when considered in the comfort of a snug, warm bed.

But we may remember that though waits are of doubtful antiquity, and indeterminate in their original character—nobody being able to decide whether the first 'waits' were singers or hired watchmen; yet they follow out perhaps the most ancient of all Christmas customs; since we read that in the early Christmas churches the bishops used to assemble all their clergy to sing carols.

We give to Christmas a very characteristic rendering in making it an occasion of feasting and revelry and jesting, but almost all the many carols which have from time to time echoed popular feeling, have marked the connection of the merry, merry time with the Babe of Bethlehem.

Even if they do not retain a distinctly religious element, they still breathe the spirit of the heavenly message with which His birth was proclaimed to man, as in the popular little carol of the time of James I., quoted in "Ancient Songs and Ballads:"

God bless the master of this house,
The mistress also,
And the little children
That round the table go,
And all your kin and kinfolk
That dwell both far and near,
I wish you a merry Christmas
And a Happy New Year!

TRY Buckingham's Dye for the whiskers; it is an elegant, safe, and reliable article, cheap and convenient for use, and will not rub off.

Facetiæ.

Clothes observers—Tailors.

It's meet and drink that is depriving many a family of food.

Widows and widowers often mend their conditions by repairing.

Why is the sun like people of fashion? It turns the night into day.

When is soup likely to run out of a saucepan? When there is a leek in it.

It seems absurd to write a book in this country, and then have it bound in Turkey.

If the anatomy of some people were constructed upon the proportion of what they say to what they do, there wouldn't be anything of them but mouth.

A boy who once kissed the schoolmarm is now the mayor of a Western city. When one enters upon a career of crime there's no knowing where he may end.

An English soldier being asked if he met with much hospitality while he was in Ireland, replied that he did; he was in the hospital nearly all the time he was there.

Johnny is just beginning to learn geography. He says that the Poles live partly at one end of the globe, and partly at the other. He knows that is so, because it is marked on the map.

A Safeguard.

The fatal rapidity with which slight **Colds** and **Coughs** frequently develop into the gravest maladies of the throat and lungs, is a consideration which should impel every prudent person to keep at hand, as a household remedy, a bottle of AYER'S CHERRY PECTORAL.

Nothing else gives such immediate relief and works so sure a cure in all affections of this class. That eminent physician, Prof. F. Sweetzer, of the Maine Medical School, Brunswick, Me., says:—

"Medical science has produced no other anodyne expectorant so good as AYER'S CHERRY PECTORAL. It is invaluable for diseases of the throat and lungs."

The same opinion is expressed by the well-known Dr. L. J. Addison, of Chicago, Ill., who says:—

"I have never found, in thirty-five years of continuous study and practice of medicine, any preparation of so great value as AYER'S CHERRY PECTORAL, for treatment of diseases of the throat and lungs. It not only breaks up colds and cures severe coughs, but is more effective than anything else in relieving even the most serious **bronchial and pulmonary affections.**"

AYER'S
Cherry Pectoral

Is not a new claimant for popular confidence, but a medicine which is to-day saving the lives of the third generation who have come into being since it was first offered to the public.

There is not a household in which this invaluable remedy has once been introduced where its use has ever been abandoned, and there is not a person who has ever given it a proper trial for any throat or lung disease susceptible of cure, who has not been made well by it.

AYER'S CHERRY PECTORAL has, in numberless instances, cured obstinate cases of chronic **Bronchitis, Laryngitis,** and even acute **Pneumonia,** and has saved many patients in the earlier stages of **Pulmonary Consumption.** It is a medicine that only requires to be taken in small doses, is pleasant to the taste, and is needed in every house where there are children, as there is nothing so good as AYER'S CHERRY PECTORAL for treatment of **Croup** and **Whooping Cough.**

These are all plain facts, which can be verified by anybody, and should be remembered by everybody.

Ayer's Cherry Pectoral

PREPARED BY

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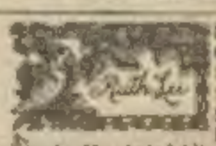

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FASHION CHAT.

THE fact that most of the new dresses are made of two materials, has reduced the necessity for elaborate trimmings; but those that have been introduced are remarkably handsome, and in many cases originate quite new ideas.

Sometimes the one material used on a plainer stuff is applied as a garniture and nothing more; and for this some costly beaded fabrics are prepared, such as a rich velvet brocade, thrown on a closely-woven woollen ground, which has a surface as smooth as satin.

The brocade is outlined in beds, and it is rich and well-wearing, width 23in. It is applied as a waistcoat, cuffs, pockets, and robings on the skirt.

A similar class of material is covered all over, not only with beads worked in, but with tiny pendant tassels of the finest cut beads. Another has a beaded arabesque pattern in stripes, so that it can be cut and applied in bands. These are all made in colored as well as in jet beads.

Fringes and galons and appliques of beaded passementerie are almost the only trimmings used. The fringes are made in beads and chenille.

The chenille is not merely looped and in single lines, but is made in the form of points widening towards the top, or a succession of balls—indeed, in endless varieties, with intertwisted headings like net work. Others of a more costly kind, chiefly used for mantles, have above the pendant loops or ball fringes, an admixture of twisted cord with a large chenille leaf or fruit, apparently laid on.

A new fringe of chenille is intermixed with silk, with a netted heading, having a ball drop in chenille at the point.

Nearly all the gimp tassels and trimmings, are divisible; that is, they are formed of leaves or drops, which can be used separately, and they are very fashionable so used. Jet drops and tassels sewn separately amid lace or fringe are much worn; and these take the form of balls, seaweed, mulberries, &c.

A useful heading is made of black chenille loops and crystalised crimped silk—such as hitherto has only been used for mourning.

White crystal drops are being employed once more on evening dresses, and appliques of ordinary colored satin beads, chenille, crystal and pearl fringes, also galons mixed with crystal.

Iridescent beads play an important part. A beautiful garniture has large leaves in gold beads, thrown on a chenille and pearl ground-work.

On mantles, single drops of a tremendous size are employed; but happily the huge silk-covered balls, or succession of balls, are cork, so that their weight is not great; they are headed by large leaves in chenille and beads.

Ball fringes in wool, and even fur (a very decided novelty), are worn; fur tails are also used.

The fashionable furs are natural undyed ones, such as mink, sable, beaver, grey squirrel, grey and bright Persian lamb, marten tail, and, more than all, Astrachan, real and imitation.

The latter is very durable, and is to be had in both grey and black. Astrachan is not costly, and is being worn on cloth dresses, on short jackets, and for shoulder capes.

Plain rows of stitching are a favorite trimming on cloth dresses or bridings. They are now selling an admirable trimming of Russian braid in good designs, which when sewn on the dress look as if actually braided; several cords and braidings for placing across the front of the dress are also to be had.

Marabout feather trimming continues in favor for dresses and mantles, and has been so improved in the making that it will not rub off the foundation and will stand rain. It is now made up on a very wide foundation of muslin, marked out in inches, and can be torn down to any width required, and is to be had in all colors. Ostrich feather and cock feather trimming are worn, but not so much.

Braids of various widths are also used, the newest being a basket-plait, interblended with gold. A very magnificent trimming is scollopped at both edges, and has a velvet foundation, on which is thrown a tambour embroidery in cashmerienne colors, outlined in gold; it is worn on opera cloaks, tea gowns, &c.

The fashionable buttons for dresses are either bullet shape or coin shape. They are made in dull vegetable ivory to match any shade, and in a composition which resembles pebbles.

The coin buttons are in plain gold, steel, and silver, sometimes inlaid, engraved, or intermixed with steel. Horn inlaid with metal are among the more expensive kinds.

Then there are the netted and crochet buttons, which are always fashionable. Gold ball filigree buttons are in favor, and large-sized gilt buttons with an enamelled palette in mother-of-pearl, and another costly kind like a half crescent in pearl or steel. Very large mother-of-pearl buttons are painted with dragons in delicate coloring.

Veritable cream lace, not tea or saffron color, or twine, is now in vogue. Most of the fashion laces, black and cream, are made sufficiently wide to cover a skirt entirely.

The great novelty of the year is worsted lace, made really of wool, and to be had in black, cream, and most colors and widths, the patterns of the torchon order. It is used on dresses.

Black Spanish lace is not quite out of date; but Chantilly is much more worn, also Melange, a mixture of the two—the ground Chantilly, the patterns both Spanish and Chantilly—in the same lace.

Guipure lace is made in all colors, and there are a good many inexpensive cotton laces.

The machine-made Valenciennes has been produced at much lower prices and far better patterns.

One of the prettiest laces is the Malines, with silk ground and cotton pattern, which appears to have no ground at all; this is spotted, and also is celebrated for the maidenhair pattern.

A new imitation lace, brought out under the name of "Honiton point," is as unlike Honiton as can well be imagined, but has the design outlined with silk, which brightens it.

Much beaded lace is employed, both jet and colored beads. Bows of ribbon appear on many of the dresses, and there is a great deal that is new in ribbons.

Stripes of velvet and moire are new, but more distinctly novel is a twine network thrown on a silk foundation and outlined in gold. All the new ribbons are reversible and have a satin face. Many have tiny pin point spots all over one side; others have spot effects.

The brocades are mostly in one color, with the design either sunk or in relief, such as velvet or terry, with the design in satin, or satin with the brocade in velvet.

Many of the corded ribbons have the cord running lengthwise, and some have a cord out here and there, and others are entirely terry.

A new mourning ribbon is made of ottoman faille of a leathery substance. Ottoman ribbons are still much worn.

A novelty is a little carcase covered with a part of a silk handkerchief with two corners. This is thrust in the front of the dress, the corners peeping out in front.

The most fashionable additions to dresses made in either lace, silk, or velvet, is a square collar at the back, and two plaited scarves sewn to each edge on the shoulder; the ends trimmed are long enough to fall below the waist.

These are sewn together, and the whole is slipped over the head, and falls on to the bodice quite easily without much arrangement.

A gold braid on the edge of the silk or velvet is an improvement.

Fireside Chat.

HOW TO MAKE SAUCES.

[CONCLUDED FROM LAST WEEK.]

THE addition of sugar, treacle, wine or brandy will make it into sauce suitable for puddings. It must always be remembered that egg yolk, cream and chopped parsley should not boil in the sauce, they should be stirred in at the last moment; also that white onion sauce should be made with milk instead of water. In brown onion sauce the onions are browned before being used.

When sauce is to be served with meat or fish, stock made of the trimmings should be substituted for the water. When it is practicable, it is always desirable to use even weak stock instead of water, because it contains more nourishment.

Of course, brown stock is taken for brown sauces, and white stock for white sauces. When stock is used, it should be added very gradually.

If hot stock were thrown in all at once, the sauce would be lumpy. Skim milk is frequently used instead of white stock in making white sauce, for economy's sake.

For the same reason—economy—dripping is occasionally used instead of butter in making sauce.

If anyone feels inclined to look scornful on hearing this, I should like to remark that for every culinary purpose good dripping is to be preferred to bad butter. You may make excellent sauce with pure dripping; it is not possible to make sauce that will even pass muster with rancid butter. A smaller quantity of dripping than butter should be used, however, or the flavor of the sauce will not be good.

Excellent fish sauce may be made by adding lemon-juice, parsley, and cream to melted butter. When cream is used, less butter is needed.

Brown sauce and white sauce are very favorite preparations, suited for a variety of dishes.

Brown sauce may be made as follows: Peel a shalot, or small onion, scrape half a moderate-sized carrot, remove the dark skin and dark stalk from three mushrooms; chop all finely.

Melt an ounce of butter in a saucepan, sprinkle an ounce of flour into it, and beat it to prevent it forming into lumps. Pour in gradually half a pint of brown stock, stirring all the time; then add the vegetables, a bay leaf, and a sprig of thyme. Draw the pan back, and let the sauce simmer for twenty minutes.

Add pepper and salt, and two tablespoonfuls of Harvey's sauce; strain and serve.

The flavor of this brown sauce may be varied in accordance with not only the taste of the maker, but the contents of the store closet, care being taken always to make it suited to the meat it is to accompany.

Thus a little celery may be substituted for the mushrooms, and a slice of turnip may be added, or lemon-peel, parsley, or a bunch of sweet herbs may be introduced. A slice of lean ham is a very flavoring ingredient.

Some cooks think that good brown sauce cannot be made without ham, and there is a story told of a cook who, having to prepare a little supper for a prince, ordered fifty hams, only one of which was to go to table; the rest were to be used in making sauces.

Chopped pickle or chopped oysters will also give piquancy to a sauce. Essence of anchovy, too, is a valuable flavorer. A very small quantity, not enough to suggest its own taste, may be put into other than fish sauces, because anchovy possesses the property of bringing out other flavors.

Wine and made sauces, such as Harvey, ketchup, or Worcester sauce, are also frequently added, but these should be introduced very judiciously, because a really good sauce should taste of something else than ketchup.

Sometimes the sauce looks very well, but it is not sufficiently brown. Drab brown sauce should never be sent to the table: it is enough to spoil anyone's appetite. There are various ways of supplying color to brown sauce.

Roux, or a mixture of flour and butter browned together over the fire, is employed, as are also burnt onions, browning, and even burnt sugar.

To my mind the most convenient preparation which can be procured is the "Pastilles Carpentier." It is sold in tins, to be bought of any grocer, and will keep any length of time.

It will be understood, therefore, that what is called Espagnol (Spanish), or brown sauce is merely good stock well flavored with vegetables, and made thick and brown.

White sauce is another celebrated French sauce; indeed, brown sauce and white sauce, or, in other words, Espagnol and Veloutee, may be said to be to the French what melted butter is to the English—the foundation of many others.

Bechamel, Allemand or German, Dutch or Hollandaise, poulette, oyster, celery, and many other sauces are made from white sauce. It consists of rich white stock delicately flavored and mixed with cream, eggs, or whatever else is its distinctive ingredient.

White sauce is less frequently well-made than brown sauce, but the following recipe will, I think, be found excellent:

Prepare and chop small two ounces of lean ham; melt two ounces of butter in a stewpan, throw in the ham, and let it fry gently, not discolor. Sprinkle an ounce and a half of flour over, and beat till smooth. Add gradually a pint of white stock, two small carrots, and six button mushrooms, stir the sauce till it boils; draw the pan back, and simmer gently till thick. Remove the fat from the sauce as it rises, strain it through a "tammy," and add last of all a gill of cream and a few drops of lemon-juice.

Perhaps I had better say in explanation that superior sauces are best made perfectly smooth by being passed through a "tammy," or loose cloth especially manufactured for the purpose.

The cloth should be laid over a basin, and the sauce poured upon it. The cloth should then be folded over to hold the sauce securely: one person should take it up at one end and another at the opposite end, and then the two operators should twist their ends different ways so as to squeeze the liquid through. The cream may be added afterwards.

White sauce is frequently used to coat fowls, &c., that is, it is made very thick, and then laid gently over to cover the meat entirely.

Sauce to be used thus should be stiff, so that it will not run off the meat; therefore it is made either with stock that is so strong that it jellies when cold, or with stock in which a little gelantine has been dissolved.

Plain white sauce may be made with some of the liquor in which fowls or rabbits have been boiled, if a little carrot and onion, three or four peppercorns, and a small piece of mace or lemon peel be simmered in it till it is pleasantly flavored.

It should then be strained, skimmed, reduced—that is, boiled down quickly till the required quantity only remains—thickened, and mixed with cream.

Correspondence.

Z. S.—Try again.

SURREY.—He would have to contribute one-third.

P. W F.—Leave all such matters alone, and attend to your daily duties.

J. C. R.—Write to the Secretary, who will give you every information.

L. F.—By letting her see that you deserve to win her. To win is to conquer.

CORINTH.—Write direct to the parties advertising. They are responsible people.

S. I.—To do what you suggest would be to commit a criminal offense, punishable by imprisonment.

L. L. Z.—We know of no machine by the name you mention. You do not tell what kind of a machine it is.

EVAN.—Dr. Herschel computed that the comet which appeared in 1811 was upwards of 100,000,000 miles, and its apparent greatest breadth at the same time 15,000,000 miles.

E. S. T.—You have acted very properly, and should continue in the same line of conduct until the young lady manifests a disposition to repent, and a desire to regain your favor.

MOLLY B.—A young lady cannot do anything to win a man's love, except to be as attractive to him as possible. And among all those feminine qualities which are most attractive to men are modesty, delicacy, and devotion to duty.

BACHELOR.—The quantity of nicotine contained in tobacco varies from two to eight per cent., the coarser kinds containing the larger quantity, while the best Havanna cigars seldom contain more than two per cent., and often less.

C. L. O.—Orris root grows wild in the South of France. It is not only ground up and used to scent hair powder, tooth powder, and hair oils, but is also distilled and made into a perfume called essence of violets, though it has no violets in it.

W. S. P.—The lines you quote are from a poem by the Rev. Charles Kingsley, entitled "A Farewell." This is the stanza:—

"Be good, sweet maid, and let who will be clever;
Do noble things, not dream them, all day long:
And so make life, death, and the vast forever
One grand, sweet song."

LIZZIE.—You were guilty of a very great rudeness in snatching the photograph from the gentleman's hand, but we think that if you return it, with a pleasant little note telling him that you did not mean to offend, he will be perfectly willing to overlook it and become friendly again.

R. S. H.—In the first case stated, it is the gentleman's duty to remain with the lady until some other gentleman solicits the pleasure of skating with her. In the second case, it is the gentleman's privilege to introduce other gentlemen to the lady, so as to avoid the impression that he wishes no one else to enjoy her company.

READER.—The Dominical, or Sunday Letter, is used to mark the dates on which Sunday falls throughout the year. January 1st to 7th are marked A, B, C, D, E, F, G, and the day Sunday falls on is the letter. By reference to a table (see Prayer-Book), all the Sundays in that year are dated. Leap-Year has two letters, one for use before, and the other after, the 29th of February.

M. J.—Whether or not a professing Christian should marry an unbeliever, is a matter that must be left to the individual conscience, guided by such directions as are found in the New Testament. But apart from the religious question, it is to be considered whether there is the same probability of happiness between two whose ideas are opposite, on such a serious thing as this, for "a house divided against itself cannot stand."

Q. E. E.—1. "Ralph" is the same as "Rudolphus," a Latin name, signifying a famous wolf, or a hero. In German it is "Rudolf." We know of no meaning to the other name. 2. There are as great varieties in the writing of men as of women, only r on a handwriting is a peculiarly delicate one, or has many spider-like lines and hairlines, we doubt its having been formed by the heavier hand of a man. There is nothing very characteristic in your writing one way or the other.

B. J. H.—The best way to deal with the boots would be to bronze them. First cover all over with size; then apply the color, which had better be prepared by grinding Prussian blue, yellow ochre, and lamp black in some weak size. The colors will require to be ground separately, and afterwards mixed together. The color must be spread evenly over the surface, and then be allowed to dry. A brush must next be dipped into some thin oil gold size, and the boot moistened with it on every part. As soon as this has partially dried, the bronze powder may be put on.

J. L.—Kissing under the mistletoe is a relic of Scandinavian mythology. Loki, the spirit of evil, hated Balder, the Apollo of the North, and as everything that springs from fire, air, earth, and water had been sworn not to hurt the celestial favorite, the wicked spirit made an arrow of mistletoe, which he gave to blind Hoder to test. The god of darkness shot the arrow and killed Balder. Being restored to life at the urgent request of the gods and goddesses, the mistletoe was given to the goddess of love to keep, and every one who passed under it received a kiss, to show that the branch was the emblem of love, and not of death.

C. L. A.—Asthma has its cause mainly in the nervous system. The air-tubes are encircled with a series of little bundles of fibres, which are, in fact, muscles, and, like other muscles, have the power of contracting or shortening themselves. These muscles are, too, like all others, have nerves distributed, or irritable, they will become disturbed on certain occasions, and cause these small, circular puckering-strings to contract and close up their air-tubes near their terminations, very much as the puckering-strings close the mouth of the work-bag, so that very little air can pass into the air-cells, and that little with great difficulty and slowness. When these contractions take place, and the air is thus shut off, the result is a fit of asthma. This disease, which has been regarded as extremely difficult to cure, may be brought on by any of those states of the atmosphere which disturb or irritate the bronchial surface, or by any of the numerous causes which mysteriously unbalance the nervous system. A fit may be brought on by whatever disturbs the mind.